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Chairman: Mr. Niculescu ..... (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 95: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*) (A/C.2/55/L.6)

Introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/55/L.6

1. **Mr. Nurov** (Tajikistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/55/L.6 on the international year of freshwater, 2003.

Agenda item 100: Globalization and interdependence (A/55/381, A/55/75-E/2000/55, A/55/74, A/55/133-S/2000/682, A/55/139-E/2000/93, A/55/157-E/2000/101, A/55/257-S/2000/766, A/55/260-E/2000/108, A/55/309, A/55/310, A/55/375 and A/55/473)

2. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-agency Affairs) introduced the report of the Secretary-General entitled "The role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence" (A/55/381). The report, consistent with resolution 54/231, focused on the transfer of information and communication technologies (ICT) and on ways to promote the contribution of the United Nations in that area.

3. Few issues had captured so much attention as that of information and communication technologies. Indeed, those technologies were a driving force of globalization, and a tool for bringing people closer together and for sharing knowledge. And yet, they bypassed many peoples and countries, particularly the developing and least developed countries which risked being left out of the information revolution and its applications. In short, they exemplified the problem referred to by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs when he had spoken of "incomplete globalization".

4. The Second Committee, on the basis of the Secretary-General's report, should therefore give renewed impetus to the efforts of the United Nations system to help developing countries obtain access to and use those technologies. It should go even further and formulate practical, action-oriented conclusions in response to some of the concerns voiced at the Millennium Summit.

5. Indeed, the Second Committee debates should enable the General Assembly to move ahead in bridging the digital divide. As the Secretary-General had indicated in his report on the millennium, the digital divide could and would be bridged. There was general agreement that ensuring universal access to information and communication technologies was possible but required a sustained global effort. In that connection, the report of the high-level panel of experts, the Declaration of the Group of 77 South Summit and the communiqué of the Group of Eight called for urgent action and proposed specific measures to that end.

6. On the basis of the report of the panel of experts (A/55/75-E/2000/55), the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in 2000 had brought together key actors in order to develop ways of mobilizing ICT to help turn globalization into a positive force for development. In that context, the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Council (E/2000/L.9) endorsed the proposal to establish a task force to increase the digital opportunities of developing countries and help them formulate national "ICT for development" programmes. Consultations were already under way with regard to the composition, terms of reference and working methods of the task force.

7. The report included a set of practical recommendations intended to complement those contained in the Ministerial Declaration of the Economic and Social Council. It highlighted the very important role that the regional commissions could play in the development of regional ICT strategies. Future debates of the Second Committee could help bring about progress in that area.

8. As for the Economic and Social Council, the high-level segment would be followed up by a coordination segment that would address the role of the United Nations in promoting access to knowledge and technology, focusing on partnerships with relevant stakeholders. In September 2001, the debates of the General Assembly were expected to deal with, inter alia, the problem of developing countries' access to information and communication technologies, and their integration into the global information network. The debates of the Second Committee during the current session should reaffirm the achievements of the Economic and Social Council's July session and ensure that they were carried forward to 2001.

9. **Mr. Levitte** (France) spoke on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey and, in addition, Iceland.

10. The Heads of State and Government had said at the Millennium Summit that they hoped to contribute to the emergence of a more harmonious and united world economy in which developing countries would be able to take up the challenges of the twenty-first century, attain economic prosperity and achieve the objectives of human and sustainable development of their peoples. That hope must not remain a vain one.

11. The phenomenon of globalization was marked by both an increase in interdependence and a deepening of inequalities. Rapid technological change and a greater opening up of markets unquestionably offered opportunities for developing economic activities. The potential benefits of globalization were known: sustained economic growth, a higher standard of living, technological progress and the more rapid dissemination of technology and know-how. The fact was, however, that the benefits of globalization were unequally distributed among countries, among regions and even within individual countries, whether industrialized or developing.

12. While acknowledging globalization's great potential to stimulate the economic growth of the poorest countries, the European Union was concerned that certain developing countries, particularly those with the most fragile institutional and oversight structures, were unable to benefit fully from that potential. Globalization must go hand in hand with measures, at the international as well as the national level, to give it a human face and ensure that it was beneficial to all. The first step in that process would be the creation of an internal and external environment conducive to strong economic growth and social measures in favour of the poorest people. That was one of the reasons why the European Union attached such importance to good governance, characterized by transparency and inclusiveness.

13. For the European Union, guaranteeing the integration of all the developing countries into a rapidly developing world economy and reducing the risks of marginalization, particularly for the least developed and smallest economies, was a major challenge to which the international community must respond.

14. In that spirit, the European Union believed that decision-making on international economic policy must be transparent and accountable. It also set great store by the need to increase the ability of the least developed countries to make their requirements known in international negotiations. In that connection, it encouraged the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to continue its activities to assist the developing countries in order to strengthen their capacities and ensure that development issues were taken into account in world trade negotiations.

15. In the context of an increasingly integrated world economy, the European Union also supported further efforts to promote greater policy coherence, complementarity and coordination of economic and development issues among the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The mobilization and involvement of all development actors was essential for enhancing the effectiveness of ongoing action.

16. At its tenth session, held in Bangkok in February 2000, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had stressed the importance of the framing and implementation of integrated development strategies in an increasingly interdependent world. In that respect, the European Union urged a balanced approach towards the issues of globalization, integrating the social, human and environmental dimensions of development. That approach was essential for deepening the dialogue between North and South.

17. The great progress made in the areas of communications and technology had done much to speed up globalization. Those changes had led to the emergence of a new economy which was rich in potential for growth and trade, including the potential for developing countries to leapfrog traditional barriers to development. However, those changes also required countries and businesses to adopt new strategies to improve their competitiveness through better access to worldwide information networks.

18. The high-level segment of the substantive session of the Council in July 2000 had provided an opportunity to identify the scale of the technological divides not only between North and South, but also within one and the same region or country. There was

therefore an urgent need to take effective measures to overcome the digital divide.

19. As was made clear in the report submitted on the issue by the Secretariat, reducing the digital divide meant finding solutions to the problems facing the developing countries: improving their connectability and enhancing the capacity of their basic infrastructure; encouraging the transfer of technology; and ensuring a better standard of literacy and lifelong education. In the interests of preserving cultural diversity, the European Union also considered it essential that the local content of the Internet in the developing countries, and particularly in the least developed countries, should be enhanced and developed.

20. In the view of the European Union, the sharing of knowledge was essential for the effective involvement of the developing countries in the world economy; it must be ensured that practical and effective measures were taken to move towards greater equality of opportunity for access to information and communication technologies.

21. To attain that goal, the entire international community: international, regional and local players, needed to be mobilized, while not forgetting the importance of the dynamic involvement of civil society, local authorities and the private sector in funding and implementing the projects that were devised.

22. The United Nations was already doing much to combat the digital divide. It needed to do more. The specific know-how acquired and developed in the area by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNCTAD, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), to name but a few, was helping to anticipate the dangers involved in the divide and to reduce the technological gaps.

23. The European Union considered that coordination of the action taken by the United Nations agencies should be stepped up. In that respect, the Economic and Social Council resolution proposing the establishment of a task force under the aegis of the Secretary-General could encourage greater complementarity and consistency of the activities of the United Nations funds and agencies. The coordination segment of the substantive session of the Council in 2001 could also contribute to that goal, as well as the next human development report of UNDP.

24. Lastly, faced with the multiplicity of international initiatives, such as the Digital Opportunities Task Force created at the summit meeting of the Group of Eight at Okinawa, it was important for the various multilateral forums involved, including the United Nations, to be able to propose consistent action. It was thus more necessary than ever to improve communications and complementarity between those various bodies and to avoid duplication at all costs.

25. **Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group, said that globalization and the revolution in information technologies were closely linked. Globalization had forced the main actors on the international scene — States, the business sector and civil society — to adapt rapidly to that new reality. The Internet, through its networks, had helped to produce better informed consumers; in addition, the ease of using digital information made it possible for an infinite array of services to be offered free of charge.

26. The Rio Group believed that the impact of globalization not only in the economic sphere but also in the daily lives of individuals made it necessary for the international community to prepare to meet the challenges which lay ahead. It should not be forgotten that at present the masses who were barely able to meet their basic needs were completely excluded from the information highway. The United Nations had a key role to play in preventing the digital gap from widening; the Rio Group supported the declaration adopted by the Council at its recent high-level segment, and particularly the decision to establish a working group to deal with that situation and help the developing countries join the modern world. It also believed that the initiative launched by the Secretary-General concerning a consortium of volunteer corps which would train groups in the uses of information technology was of particular importance and welcomed the "global compact" initiative launched by the Secretary-General.

27. It was important for Governments to commit themselves to investing in education and science in order to alleviate the harsh effects of globalization. The member countries of the Rio Group believed that the

process of globalization must take into account the needs of the weakest. They had taken steps to strengthen their institutional and political structures in order to take advantage of globalization and limit the risks inherent in that process: that had led to a better allocation of resources, freer circulation of knowledge, improvements in public administration and a more open and competitive environment. Although the region had suffered from capital instability and the resulting financial crises, it should be stressed that the regional integration processes which were being pursued had helped consolidate democracy, increase the potential of each country, whose opportunities for growth had been improved by attracting direct foreign investment, and facilitate insertion into the world economy.

28. The Rio Group believed that integration had served as a vehicle for accentuating the positive elements of globalization. Regional integration meant more than market liberalization: it involved linking the interests of the countries involved based on their geographical, economic, political . and cultural affinities, and consolidating the presence of the region in the modern interdependent world.

29. **Mr. Leiro** (Norway) commended the report submitted by the Secretary-General on agenda item 100 entitled "Globalization and interdependence". The rapid development of information and communication technologies had revitalized international trade and stimulated the globalization process. Information and knowledge had emerged as strategic factors in economic and social progress. Several developing countries had had positive experience in that respect, as was demonstrated by the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNET).

30. However, those immense possibilities were far from being fully utilized. The digital divide between developing and industrialized countries reflected the huge inequality in the global economy. Africa, for example, which had 20 per cent of the world's population, had only 2 per cent of the world's telephone lines, and its access to the Internet remained marginal.

31. Norway endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation concerning the need to support the creation of knowledge locally and to address concerns about cultural intrusion, language barriers and the social impact of the new economy. Ideas and values originating in developed countries and reflecting Western culture could come in conflict with the values of local communities in developing countries. The Internet must never become a place where the rule of law did not apply. The establishment of the Health InterNetwork announced by the Secretary-General was an example of how new technology could be put to work to meet basic human needs.

32. Norway welcomed the proposal in the ministerial declaration of the Council (E/2000/L.9) to establish a United Nations digital task force in a manner that could forge a strategic partnership between the United Nations system, private industry foundations, donors and other relevant stakeholders. It was encouraging that the consultation process with all stakeholders was already under way.

33. He wished to underline some of the strategic lessons learned from the experience that had been gained which should guide the future role of the United Nations system in the area of information and communication technologies. First, a national legal and regulatory framework conducive to development in the field of information and communication technologies was of overriding importance; the dissemination of information and best practices must be promoted to help countries to develop appropriate institutional arrangements and sound investments. Second, there was a need to invest in human resources development and to build national competence and institutional capacity in the form of partnerships between governments, universities, research institutes and the private sector. Third, programmes that stimulated South-South cooperation were a strategic necessity for the creation of local knowledge and for use of information and communication technologies that could improve people's lives. Fourth, problems must be approached in a way that was gender neutral. In Bangladesh, for example, experience had borne witness to the benefits of giving women equal opportunities in the field of information and communication technologies.

34. Finally, he stressed that the role of the United Nations in the area of information and communication technologies must be based on partnerships with all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector. The Organization must define its role clearly and make a contribution that was relevant at all times.

35. **Mr. Patrício** (Mozambique), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that SADC associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The report of the Secretary-General on globalization (A/55/381) addressed the transfer of information and communication technologies to developing countries, a crucial element in reducing the digital divide between the developed and developing countries which was shaping the contours of globalization. SADC welcomed the decision of the Economic and Social Council to create a task force and a trust fund for information and communication technologies as a follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration of the 2000 high-level segment. The Millennium Summit had also singled out globalization as one of the most pressing current challenges. Its main characteristics were the information revolution, growing interaction and interdependence among countries, the liberalization of trade, investments and capital markets, as well as new policy and decision-making processes. Globalization was having different effects around the world; some developed countries were living in abundance, while the large majority of developing countries, including the entire African continent, were being increasingly marginalized. The burden of globalization was unevenly shared and countries with different levels of development were asked to compete in the global economy. Without eliminating market rules, it was necessary to give a human face to globalization from a perspective of sustainable and equitable development. Globalization must become a positive force for all the world's people. The member countries of SADC had already undertaken initiatives at the regional level aimed at fostering peace, stability and greater cooperation and economic integration. The region had recorded important achievements in the economic sphere, in particular positive growth rates, rates of inflation below 10 per cent and a reduction in budget deficits. SADC had also established a regional framework to facilitate the integration of its member countries into the global economy; at the Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Windhoek, Namibia, its leaders had ratified the entry into force of the SADC trade protocol, an instrument that would ensure the opening of the regional market as well as the free movement of people, goods and services. However, SADC, being comprised of developing countries, needed international cooperation and assistance, in particular, adequate flows of official development assistance, foreign direct investment and access to world markets. It also needed external debt cancellation without conditions. The SADC countries would thus have the possibility of investing in such social sectors as health, education, sanitation and other basic infrastructures. Globalization was a process that could benefit all countries of the world provided that the international community showed the necessary political will to harness it properly. The main objective was the globalization of development.

36. **Mr. Herawan** (Indonesia) said that Indonesia knew only too well that the great challenge facing the international community was to transform globalization into an effective instrument of growth and development and that it was essential to integrate economies into the emerging knowledge-based global economy. The importance of information and communication technologies could not be overstated; such technologies were a strategic factor of economic and social progress and were transforming the production and consumption processes, as well as the way of life. The importance of those technologies had been reaffirmed frequently, in particular during the 2000 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, the South Summit held in Havana in April 2000, the Okinawa Charter on the Global Information Society adopted by the Group of Eight in late July, and at the Millennium Summit in September. Nevertheless, the lives of billions of human beings, particularly those living in developing countries, remained untouched by the digital revolution; only 5 per cent of the world population could claim connectivity, mostly in the developed countries. New technologies were a double-edged sword for the developing countries, holding out unprecedented opportunities, but raising the level of competition too high for their current capabilities. The current phase of globalization was characterized by the fact that knowledge had become a source of competitive advantage and was increasingly embedded in the production process itself. Many obstacles remained, including access to and transfer of information and communication technologies to the developing countries. The successful use of such technologies in the service of development could make a real difference; that required investment in infrastructure, including institutional capacities and human resources. Unless access to information and communication technologies was broadened, the digital divide could widen further and millions of people,

particularly in the developing countries, would be further marginalized. The many obstacles on the road to successful development and integration into a knowledge-based economy must be overcome. The Ministerial Declaration of the Economic and Social Council could serve as a basis for a global agenda for action, as it contained specific recommendations concerning the role of the United Nations in the promotion of information and communication technologies in the service of development, in particular, the establishment of a digital task force.

37. **Mr. Own** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that globalization was a new and very powerful phenomenon that was causing worldwide upheaval in all spheres. Its major manifestation was economic interdependence among international markets, large corporations and the three major international institutions: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. The financial markets no longer had borders and no State could regulate financial operations within its territory. The lessons learned from the East Asian crisis showed that the collapse of financial markets could shake the economies of countries throughout the world.

38. In the *World Development Report*, 1999-2000, the World Bank had stated that the developing countries could still experience disorder and human suffering because of the rapid pace of globalization, which could have positive effects but could also be very dangerous for the developing countries, possibly marginalizing them completely on the economic level.

39. The international community was interested above all in the opportunities offered by globalization and the challenges that must be faced in that connection. Experience had shown that, thus far, for many countries, developing countries in particular, the cost was high. The least developed countries were even more severely affected. For example, the gap was widening between the developed and the poorest commodity-exporting developing countries.

40. Globalization was based on the opening up and liberalization of the economy and was not concerned with improving the world economy or the international financial system, nor with the social dimension of development. The opportunities for international organizations, for example the United Nations Development Programme, to intervene had diminished, because, year after year, the rich countries were reducing their contributions to core resources. Official development assistance had continued to decline since the Rio Conference, during which the developed countries had made a commitment to allocate at least 0.07 per cent of their gross national product to development. Few countries had met that objective, and the others must demonstrate the political will necessary to reach it.

41. The first to suffer from the adverse effects of globalization were the poor and vulnerable groups such as children, women, the elderly and the handicapped. It was safe to say that the overwhelming majority of developing countries suffered from the adverse effects of globalization.

42. Without global economic growth, economic development could not bring about a sustained increase in the incomes of the poor. The shortcomings of the international economic system needed to be corrected in order to enable developing countries to benefit from globalization. A system which operated in accordance with established rules needed to be put into place at the international level. The East Asian crisis had demonstrated the need for a stable and sound international financial system. A realistic approach must be taken with respect to the debt issue.

43. His delegation endorsed the statement of the UNCTAD Secretary-General that industrialized countries should reconsider their strategies from a viewpoint that went beyond economic considerations and took into account moral issues such as justice, equity, compassion and solidarity. History would judge progress achieved in the twenty-first century on the basis of progress with respect to equality between peoples.

44. **Ms. Hormilla Castro** (Cuba) said that her delegation accorded great importance to the issue of globalization, to which considerable attention had already been devoted at various high-level conferences such as the Havana South Summit and the Millennium Summit. It had been stressed at those conferences that the countries of the South had not been able to derive the same benefits that developed countries had from globalization and that they had in fact been prevented from benefiting from the process. It was becoming increasingly clear that, rather than providing lasting solutions to the basic problems of developing countries, the imposition of the neoliberal model merely made them more vulnerable. While the

financial markets had apparently recovered from the crisis which had spread from South-East Asia, mankind still remained vulnerable to similar, if not worse crises. A fundamental reform of the international financial system and its institutions was urgently needed in order to address the interrelated problems of international finance, trade, technology and development. Moreover, the process of globalization and interdependence should not be used as a pretext for undermining or reinterpreting the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, or failing to fully observe international law, which constituted the bases for establishing ties of peace and friendship among States and for the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

45. She welcomed the report entitled "The role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence" (A/55/381) which, together with other recent debates of the Economic and Social Council and the Council's ministerial declaration, provided substantial guidance to understanding the role of the United Nations in a field as revolutionary as that of information and communication technologies, which were vital to participating in the new knowledge-based world economy. While information and communication technologies obviously had a tremendous potential for promoting development, their impact would be very limited if they were not accompanied by a comprehensive social development programme in Third World countries. The international community needed to undergo a fundamental change in order to prevent a widening of the gap in access to information and knowledge. Recognition of the principle of the universal right to information called for the establishment of a new world communications and information order that guaranteed more equitable distribution as well as linguistic and cultural diversity of digital information. The United Nations should spearhead the world's efforts to coordinate the implementation of measures in the area of information and communications in order to ensure that developing countries would be able to benefit from and participate in that revolution. South-South cooperation was another important dimension of international cooperation in that area. The South Summit held in April 2000 in Havana had stressed the need to give a fresh impetus to such cooperation as an effective means of streamlining the collective potential of countries of the South and promoting development through the mobilization and exchange of human resources.

46. **Mr. Petrov** (Russian Federation) said that for a long time the growing interdependence of national markets for goods, services, capital and labour had been viewed exclusively as a progressive phenomenon that contributed to the spread of economic growth and to a more efficient use of the world's resources. At the same time, the risks connected with globalization, which represented a threat to the economically vulnerable countries, had gone unnoticed and had been underestimated. It was only the wave of financial crises that had buffeted several regions in the 1990s that had revealed not only the dangers inherent in globalization, but how ill prepared the international community was to deal with its adverse effects. The extent of the task of converting globalization into a positive and beneficial force for all the peoples of the world had been assessed at the recent Millennium Summit, where globalization had been recognized as the main challenge facing the international community as it entered a new century. An international strategy oriented towards the creation of a stable environment for sustainable development that took into account the impact of globalization needed to be formulated as an effective and comprehensive response to that challenge. As one of the most universal and representative bodies for multilateral cooperation, the United Nations had made the most significant contribution towards the formulation of such a strategy. It played a significant role as an intermediary by reconciling interests and eliminating disagreements between countries. The Organization's comparative advantages should be used to the fullest extent possible in undertaking a profound review of what was at stake in globalization in order to take advantage of its benefits and minimize the costs connected with it in the interest of all Member States, taking into account the Secretary-General's proposals and the recommendations of the latest session of the Economic and Social Council. Those issues should be at the heart of the international development strategy being formulated for the next decade. The search for concerted approaches to global issues of development, including in the areas of international trade, financial relations and external debt, should be undertaken in close collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other multilateral organizations. In his view, the new strategy should take into account the fact that radical transformations were needed in many multilateral organizations and management mechanisms if they were to be adapted to

the context of globalization. The increasing integration of national economies into the world economy coupled with the growing openness of world markets called, in particular, for the strengthening of the international financial system, the regulation of multilateral trade and greater coordination of macroeconomic, trade, financial, environmental and development policies in order to put the international community in a better position to respond immediately to the first signs of crisis and prevent global upheavals. In that context, action by the United Nations to combat poverty, which represented a threat to sustainable development, together with the implementation of effective national policies in the social sector, should be supported. United Nations agencies operating in the field had acquired valuable experience in that regard and had a great potential to provide effective assistance to developing countries and countries in transition.

47. There was serious concern about the disparities in the levels of development of various countries which was compounded by the widening gap in information and communication technologies. The digital divide between the highly-developed countries and the rest of the world might lead to irreversible consequences. Special attention should be devoted to those problems in the new strategy. In view of the prospects that the digital divide offered humankind, and in order to ensure that all benefited equally from its fruits in the interest of sustainable development, issues relating to information and communication technologies should be included among the priority activities of the United Nations.

48. **Mr. Popov** (Belarus) said that many recent international events had helped to shape the international economic, trade and financial cooperation agenda in the context of globalization. In nearly all cases, the events had reflected the unique role played by the United Nations both as a catalyst for the political will of States and a key organizational factor. The Millennium Summit and the Final Declaration adopted at the end of the Summit had been a logical outcome of that process. He assumed that all those events reflected the views of the overwhelming majority of States about the Organization's role in international economic relations in the twenty-first century. He was firmly convinced that, because of its universal calling, the United Nations had the legitimate right and duty, in cooperation with its multilateral partners, to contribute to improving the international trading and financial system in the context of globalization and to making it more transparent, predictable and equitable.

49. The expansion of opportunities for putting information and communication technologies (ICT) in the service of development was one of the most important factors in the integration of States into the global economic system. The technological advances made in that area had radically altered the structure of the contemporary economy, and ICT had become vitally important in the globalizing international economic system. Because many countries were not in a position to take advantage of those technologies, a "digital divide" had emerged, particularly to the detriment of the least developed countries. That situation required urgent action on the part of the international community. In that connection, he was pleased that the United Nations had played a central role in mobilization efforts. The Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council (E/2000/L.9) at the high-level segment of its 2000 session had proposed an unprecedented scheme combining national and concerted international efforts to give Governments more opportunities to put ICT in the service of development. The international conference on electronic commerce held in Minsk from 18 to 20 October 2000 within the Commonwealth of Independent States and among the Eastern European countries bore witness to the importance which Belarus attached to the need to establish a solid link between national, regional and global actions in that area, as mentioned in the Declaration.

50. Belarus believed that the United Nations system should support the concrete initiatives taken by States to develop their national ICT potential. In that connection, the relevant measures set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence (A/55/381) were a step in the right direction, particularly those involving the provision of advisory services to developing countries in the formulation of policies, the improvement of legal and institutional frameworks and the creation of a favourable climate for investment, as well as the idea of enhancing ICT components in regional and national capacity-building programmes of the United Nations system. The time had come to strengthen cooperation in the area of ICT not only among the competent agencies, funds and programmes

of the United Nations system, but also with all multilateral United Nations partners, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). In that context, Belarus looked forward to the negotiations on the definition of the mandate of the ICT task force.

51. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. With respect to information and communication technologies, the role of the United Nations was to place ICT in the service of development and to provide leadership in harnessing market forces for development and minimizing their negative impact on social development. The beneficiaries of globalization believed that the latter offered immense opportunities for all, that the income and technological gaps would be narrowed in the long term and that the developing countries only needed to prepare themselves by acquiring appropriate skills to benefit from the process. In reality, globalization had impoverished a large majority while gaps continued to widen, leading to deepening poverty and social disintegration. Globalization and rapid mobility of capital in a world of abundant labour were helping the economic elite, but harming a much larger group of people who were not at the pinnacle of the worldwide distribution of income and wealth. Economic globalization represented the triumph of capital over labour; it was an ideology for perpetuating the interests of capital. Globalization of the economy in terms of production and the trade of goods was still relatively superficial and the movement of labour was highly restricted. Globalization was rewarding investors who did not create wealth, but simply extracted and concentrated existing wealth. It was a form of corporate colonialism: the developed countries intervened on behalf of their multinational corporations to ensure smooth operations in the host countries. Usually, those corporations manipulated the economic policies of the host Governments to their advantage. The advocates of globalization claimed that it was inevitable; in fact, the rich nations had been the major force in spreading the message of globalization, and remained its primary beneficiaries. However, only countries that had the necessary tools could benefit from the phenomenon, and the developing countries did not have access to those tools; instead, they were victims of widening disparities. Accordingly, the time had come to end those inequalities and to explore other means of benefiting the large majority of the world's people; otherwise, poverty and deprivation would increase.

52. **Mr. Habte** (Ethiopia), after associating himself with the views expressed by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that globalization, driven by the liberalization of trade, the deregulation of capital markets and unprecedented progress in technology, particularly in the areas of information and communication, had had a profound impact on all aspects of international relations. While it was indeed worthwhile to identify the contributions which that process could make to development and social well-being, the reality was that globalization had served to generalize social inequality and marginalization while aggravating poverty and instability in the third world. That situation was a source of concern for the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs), which relied on exports of primary commodities and were extremely vulnerable to price fluctuations in international markets.

53. Globalization undoubtedly could benefit the world as a whole, if harnessed and properly managed. Cross-border trade, finance and investment flows should be guided with a view to creating prosperity for all; the international community must increase its support for the most disadvantaged countries to improve their integration into the world economy; and developed countries should grant predictable, duty-free and quota-free market access to all exports originating from developing countries, particularly LDCs. Owing to their weak supply capabilities, LDCs needed technical and financial assistance from the international community to build the institutions and infrastructure necessary to support their export industries and attract investment. In that regard, it was necessary to ensure effective follow-up of the High-level Meeting on Integrated Initiatives for Least Developed Countries' Trade Development, held in October 1997 under the auspices of WTO, through concerted efforts by the various development partners concerned: the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), WTO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

54. With respect to debt, which was a heavy burden for LDCs, it was necessary to take concrete measures for debt relief, debt cancellation and increased

concessional terms. Creditors and international financial institutions should work together to expedite the implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. In addition, development partners should honour their official development assistance (ODA) commitments to reverse the current declining trend. With respect to foreign direct investment, which was an essential vehicle for development that had, as yet, yielded very few benefits for the African countries, despite their efforts to create a liberal, stable and attractive economic environment, investor countries should expand investment opportunities for LDCs, inter alia by underwriting perceived commercial and political risks in those countries.

55. Another factor that prevented the developing countries from reaping the benefits of globalization was their insufficient access to information and communication technologies (ICT), on which their participation in the knowledge-based economy would depend. Developing countries, particularly those in Africa, should receive assistance in strengthening their telecommunications infrastructure and service capacity, inter alia through the transfer of technology and training. As indicated in the Ministerial Declaration (E/2000/L.9) adopted by the Economic and Social Council at the end of the high-level segment of its 2000 session, urgent actions were needed to bridge the digital divide through appropriate institutional mechanisms. The ICT task force chaired by the Secretary-General could play a pivotal role in forging partnerships between Governments, the private sector and multilateral agencies to mobilize the financial and technical support which the developing countries needed to address their lack of ICT infrastructure and know-how.

56. No less important were the operating methods of the World Trade Organization, which should take account of the development needs of the least developed countries, granting them more flexible terms of membership in the light of their trading and financial situation. In that sense, his delegation endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General concerning the promotion of policy coherence, complementarity and cooperation, without which, it had been difficult to cope with the problems caused in the preceding millennium by the international financial system and trade regime. It was especially important to give special treatment to the developing countries in trade, financial cooperation and the transfer of technology, including ICT, to enable them to attain a level of industrialization at which they could participate on an equal footing in the international economy. Full integration into the international economy would permit those countries, especially the African countries, to achieve a rate of economic growth that would permit them to recover lost ground. To that end, international economic cooperation for development should be made to serve exclusively the efforts of the developing countries, and the decision-making processes, especially in the field of trade and finance, should be democratic and transparent in order to ensure full participation by those countries. The financial and monetary architecture should be seriously reviewed in order to ensure the stability of the financial markets and increase the volume of resources allocated to development in the countries of the South. His delegation was convinced of the need to develop innovative measures, in the context of renewed partnerships, in order to make globalization a tool of development, equity, integration and prosperity for all countries and peoples.

57. **Mr. Palanimanickam** (India) associated his delegation with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria, as Chairman of the Group of 77. In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders had said that the central challenge to be faced today was to ensure that globalization became a positive force for all the world's people. Globalization must support the social and economic development objectives of the developing countries. The choice was not between globalization and isolation. Rather, the debate must focus on the terms on which globalization should progress; it must serve the objectives of Article 55 of the Charter and its ultimate goal should therefore be the welfare of peoples and the full development of their potential. It must be an expression of the commitment of the international community to work together to build a new global order based not just on politics and the economy, but on universal ethics and on the fundamental values clearly outlined in the Millennium Declaration as being essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. Human beings had interacted with one another for thousands of years, but the modern phenomenon of globalization was different because of its startling rapidity. It was underpinned by the new communication technologies and the driving force of surplus capital flows in search of the most profitable investment opportunities, with their

hurricane-like ability to destroy lives, jobs, traditions and communities.

58. It would of course be a dull world if new ideas, gadgets and techniques did not capture people's imagination. However, the fascination with the new should not be at the cost of real experience and felt needs. The digital revolution represented, above all, an opportunity to create wealth for spending in the old economy, a means for satisfying other needs and a more efficient tool for development. To be successful, information technology must serve humanity and its development, and for that purpose it must reach out to the masses and encourage local content. In the field of ICT, technology often determined content. Moreover, many technologies useful to the developing countries were not accessible, because of dual-use technology control regimes. Appeals for a universal agreement, under the auspices of the United Nations, negotiated in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, to promote the transfer of such technologies for peaceful purposes had so far been in vain. The globalization driven by ICT must not bring back the centralized autocratic or oligarchic regimes which it was to be hoped, had died with the twentieth century, but must be based on a free flow of ideas. The United Nations must therefore focus primarily on the critical issue of technology transfer.

59. His delegation shared the view of the Secretary-General that knowledge had become a source of competitive advantage and was increasingly embedded within the production process. However, the availability of vast quantities of information should not be confused with knowledge. Globalization could produce a rich diversity of ideas, views and cultures, but there was no guarantee that it would be used to liberate rather than to dominate, to assist rather than to exploit. Concerted action was needed at the international level to prevent information technologies from being used for evil purposes in the world, for terrorism, money-laundering, drug trafficking and cyber-crime. Within the knowledge economy, information must at all costs be prevented from being used as a weapon of division, domination, oppression and hatred.

60. **Mrs. Khan Cummings** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that they welcomed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/55/381) concerning the problem of the transfer of information and communications technologies in the era of globalization. They advocated careful examination of the recommendations relating to the promotion of action by the United Nations in that respect and the integration of ICT components in programmes for strengthening regional and national capacities.

61. Since the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, when they had taken part in the decision to place the question of globalization and interdependence on the agenda, the CARICOM countries had worked hard with the rest of the international community to redefine the role that the United Nations could play to promote development in that context. They hoped that the subsequent decisions taken at the special session of the General Assembly on small island developing States, at the South Summit and at the Millennium Summit would be implemented.

62. The CARICOM countries were no less interested in the question of the supremacy of ICT, especially with regard to the conditions of access for developing countries. ICT had become a source of competitive advantage within the production process, in a knowledge-based economy which was not open to everyone. The 19 per cent of the world's population living in the developed countries accounted for 91 per cent of all Internet users and there was a need to connect all communities by the year 2004, as recommended by the group of experts convened in April 2000. Although information and communication technologies were a valuable tool for enhancing competitiveness and growth in key sectors of the economy, they must be combined with other factors such as market access for goods and services, financial and technical assistance and foreign direct investment to support efforts towards development and the eradication of poverty. ICT alone could not meet all the challenges of development.

63. The CARICOM countries had been granted special and differential treatment in several international agreements because of their vulnerability — small territory and populations, limited natural resources, dependency on primary products and resulting low competitiveness — and the lack of diversification of their economic activities, some of them being dependent solely on banana exports. In the era of globalization and trade liberalization, it was especially important to grant special treatment to those countries to enable them to meet the new demands

being placed on them. However, in the new environment of the World Trade Organization, that principle was being phased out. Instead, there was a decline in direct foreign investment; markets were being closed; the transfer of the technology which was fundamental in meeting development needs was in decline; there was instability on the financial markets, owing to a lack of corrective institutional mechanisms; official development assistance was being reduced; and small States were being increasingly marginalized in the multilateral trading system, and were environmentally vulnerable and susceptible to natural disasters. Flexible application of a broader set of criteria was therefore needed in order to ensure that small States, such as the States members of CARICOM, qualified for special treatment in trade and development assistance in order to promote their economic sustainability and long-term growth.

64. The Committee had focused primarily on those aspects of globalization which were linked to market liberalization and integration into the global economy, such as ICT. It was now important to address the social and political impact of globalization. The financial and trade institutions which guided the process should be reshaped, and capacities should be developed at the national and international levels to deal with the phenomenon. Greater coherence was needed in international policy-making, because of the growing interrelationship of trade, monetary and financial policy with social and environmental issues. The CARICOM countries were committed to trade liberalization, which was essential to growth and development, but they believed in an open, free and fair international trading system in which benefits would be equitably distributed and developing countries would have a voice and be able to achieve a sustained level of economic development. They were therefore ready to play their part in setting up political infrastructures to manage that process, while respecting the principles of justice and equity and preserving mutual interests.

65. **Mr. Al-Haddad** (Yemen) recalled that in the Millennium Declaration the members of the Organization had stated that they were convinced that the central challenge today was to ensure that globalization became a positive force for all the world's people. The Second Committee had a mandate to deal with economic, financial and commercial questions, which followed from the mandate of the Organization in those areas. Globalization was a new context for economic actors and economic activities throughout the world. It offered numerous possibilities in terms of the gradual removal of obstacles to trade and movement of capital in parallel with technological advances, especially in the field of information and communication technologies. But progress linked to globalization was a source of concern because only a minority of countries, mainly the most developed, benefited from it. It was in the area of means of communication that globalization had the most noticeable effects, with the opening up of markets permitting an exchange of ideas, technologies and investments, but those beneficial effects had been circumscribed and weak economies had been threatened with collapse, especially the least developed countries, which devoted the bulk of their revenue to debt repayment.

66. Other countries, like Yemen, had difficulty participating in globalization because they encountered obstacles, but they were making strenuous efforts to do so through initiatives which had serious consequences on the social level. For example, the liberalization of markets required governments to remove food subsidies, which had the effect of creating tensions among the population. Generally, structural adjustment measures taken on the advice of the international financial institutions had had the same effect. The international community must therefore ensure that sufficient aid was given to help the least developed countries to acquire the capacities necessary for developing their economies, thereby participating in globalization by being able to penetrate world markets.

67. Yemen had succeeded in stabilizing its currency's rate of exchange against the United States dollar, thereby putting an end to the negative effects which exchange rate fluctuations had had on the local currency and therefore on the balance of payments deficit caused by reduced productivity of national plans.

68. At the same time as globalization, confidence was being restored in the United Nations as the body playing a key role in correcting the negative effects of globalization. The Millennium Assembly had given the General Assembly a clear mandate in that regard which went beyond resolving economic problems related to globalization and enabled peoples to realize their social and political aspirations. To that end, and in the light of the principles of interdependence, the developing

countries must take part in global economic growth, and for that to happen it was necessary to support global development operations and open up markets to their agricultural and industrial products. The world economy could prosper on a long-term basis only if it was based on common fundamental values and practices and aimed at broader and more global social objectives.

69. There was an imbalance between the success of efforts to draw up rules for facilitating access to world markets and the support given to the achievement of the relevant social objectives, whether in terms of working conditions, human rights or poverty relief. In the formulation of world economic policies and allocation of their costs and benefits, it was essential to be fair and endeavour to meet the needs of the developing and developed countries, by rethinking the values on which international relations were based, while respecting the aims and principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

70. **Mr. Shinkaiye** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said it was certain that the central challenge facing the international community at the beginning of the twenty-first century was how to ensure that globalization benefited humanity as a whole, and not just a few industrialized countries. Thus, efforts should be focused on determining how the main instruments of globalization, namely international trade, international financial transactions, foreign direct investment and information and communication technologies (ICT) could promote integration of the world economy in such a way that developing countries could take advantage of the opportunities created by that phenomenon. At the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, it had been noted that the priority task was to ensure that appropriate global macroeconomic policies were adopted to complement the efforts of developing countries to ensure equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization. The programme of action adopted by the Group of 77 at the South Summit at Havana, Cuba, drew attention to the impact of globalization on all aspects of life. The Group had noted that globalization could be a powerful and dynamic force for strengthening cooperation and accelerating growth and development but that it also presented risks and created difficulties. It had pointed to empirical evidence showing that the gap was growing between the developed and developing countries in the wake of globalization, and concluded that the prime objective should be to make globalization beneficial for all countries and peoples. At the annual meeting of the World Bank Group, it had been emphasized that, while globalization gave workers employed in one part of the world the opportunity to develop their potential, it could at the same time cause anxiety about decisions taken in far-off lands and about their impact on the lives and jobs of others. That was why the Group of 77 welcomed the emphasis placed by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions on the issue of the transfer of ICT to developing countries and, in particular, on the coordination of policies in the field of finance, trade, technology and development at the global level in order to optimize the benefits of globalization.

71. The Group of 77 recognized that ICT were required to play a decisive role in the new global economy and were also critically important for the integration of the developing countries in an increasingly interdependent world economy. It was that realization which had led the Group of 77 at the Havana Summit to launch an appeal for effective international cooperation to bridge the ever-widening digital divide; it was an initiative similar to that contained in the report before the Committee (A/55/381). The United Nations was uniquely placed to encourage the transfer of technology, in particular ICT, to developing countries where they were most needed. Indeed, the various activities of the organizations in the United Nations system, enumerated in the report, showed that they were determined to develop strategic approaches to the global information economy and society. If properly coordinated, those activities could help developing countries to leapfrog into the development process. The recommendations contained in the Ministerial Declaration adopted following the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council (E/2000/L.9) provided a useful reference point for the action to be taken.

72. The total volume of electronic commerce transactions was projected to reach US$ 7,000 billion by 2004, but only 5 per cent of the world's population, which was concentrated in the developed countries, would benefit from that technological progress. Those figures illustrated the lopsided nature of the development of ICT in the world today. Above all, they demonstrated that the developing countries faced a more and more difficult task in bridging the divide.

The international community, and especially the United Nations, had an obligation to assist developing countries to be part of the digital revolution. Other international actors should also come to their aid, in accordance with the recommendations made by the high-level panel of experts on information and communication technologies. The Group of 77 was of the view that the recommendations regarding proclamation of the right to universal access to ICT, the creation of a task force to bring together multilateral development institutions, the private sector, foundations and trusts to facilitate investment and the expansion of the market for ICT in the developing countries, and the establishment of a fund to assist developing countries to implement their own ICT programmes were worthy of special attention.

73. At a time when the developing countries were grappling with the problems of debt, poverty, unemployment, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other dreaded diseases, the Group of 77 shared the view that the possibilities created by the ICT revolution could help in finding solutions. They welcomed the creation of the Health InterNetwork and the UNITeS initiative. It was pertinent to recall that at the South Summit the developing countries had also taken several initiatives to foster South-South cooperation in the area of information technology. They urged the agencies of the United Nations to assist in that context, particularly as envisaged in the Havana Programme of Action.

74. **Mr. Lisk** (International Labour Organization), focusing on the impact of ICT on the world of work, said that globalization had brought with it opportunities for trade expansion and consequent economic growth within States, but had also seriously hindered the attainment of employment objectives. That was particularly true in the case of countries which had not so far benefited from the gains of globalization, because they were not sufficiently competitive at the international level. In tandem with globalization, the rapid advancement of ICT had resulted in an increasingly networked global economy and a revolution in the world of work, where the notion of a "job" had taken on an entirely new meaning in terms of both form and content. In the "new economy", globalization and technological advancement were interlinked.

75. From a development perspective, the new knowledge-based economy would offer opportunities for new and faster growth patterns at the country level, based on new products, forms of employment and livelihoods, especially if the cost of ICT could be reduced. The impact of the new technology on employment was already visible in changes in the international division of labour and in the structure and functioning of domestic labour markets. Such changes were reflected in increased international competition in products both between countries and among firms in relation to costs and productivity. However, it had been noted that the benefits from the new technologies in terms of job creation and wealth generation were likely to be unevenly distributed between countries and within them owing to differential access to knowledge and to ICT.

76. Unlike other technological changes, the diffusion of ICT affected all economic sectors and organizational and work structures. That implied a fundamental rethinking of the character of employment and of the basis for production, as well as of their impact on the development process. Whereas in the past financial capital had been the main basis for the production of wealth, in the new economy knowledge would play a more important role in the development process. The basic objectives for development would be defined in terms of human resource development and the strengthening of the communication infrastructure. Thus, in the future, the key to poverty eradication might be found in new development models which emphasized the diffusion of knowledge and information technologies, rather than the mere transfer of financial capital.

77. ILO was so interested in information and communication technologies because certain trends were already discernable in respect of their impact on work and employment, and that new situation must necessarily be taken into consideration to create jobs and promote social development in an era of technological change and increasing globalization of trade and financial transactions. Globalization and technical advancement could thus result in work becoming less secure and more socially isolated than it had been in earlier production systems. As work became more flexible and more adaptable, it would be subject to less regulation, would be highly dispersed geographically and better diversified, which would no doubt open up new job opportunities but might also be detrimental to job security. Increased flexibility in the labour market could create more jobs for women both in the workplace and at home, but that would not

necessarily reduce gender inequalities in terms of access to quality jobs, pay and working conditions. On the other hand, much could be expected from it for the disabled, the long-term unemployed and older workers. Lastly, in the field of labour-management relations, new organizational structures of employers and workers must be defined to reflect the new forms of social dialogue and a new labour legislation must be put in place, in particular for home work, discrimination, freedom of association and collective bargaining in all the sectors where independent and contract workers might be unprotected by the existing legislation.

78. In conclusion, the key challenge for ILO would be ensure that ICT created new opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. As ICT costs fell, developing countries could make greater use of them to support their development objectives. Coordinated action by Governments, the private sector and social partners would be required at the firm, industry and State levels in order to make use of ICT opportunities to stimulate growth, create jobs and improve the quality of employment and people's livelihoods.

79. With its tripartite structure, ILO could contribute a great deal to strengthening social dialogue between Governments and representatives of business and labour and to helping labour market institutions to integrate ICT in the development process. Among the recent activities which illustrated the high priority given by ILO to the impact of ICT on the world of work were a tripartite international meeting on the impact of ICT on employment and working conditions in the media and entertainment industries, which would be followed by similar events for various sectors, the preparation of the 2001 edition of the *World Employment Report*, which would focus on ICT and employment, and participation in the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/55/SR.23

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Chairman: Mr. Escanero (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Mexico)

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Agenda item 100: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*)

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00-70638 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 100: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*) (A/55/381, A/55/75-E/2000/55, A/55/74, A/55/133-S/2000/682, A/55/139-E/2000/93, A/55/157-E/2000/101, A/55/257-S/2000/766, A/55/260-E/2000/108, A/55/309, A/55/310, A/55/375 and A/55/473)

1. **Mr. Loh** Tuck Wai (Singapore) said that the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICT) was not only enriching the rich but also quietly helping some of the poor. Success stories in the developing countries had been posted on web sites — www.netaid.org, launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Cisco Systems, and www.iicd.org, the International Institute for Communications and Development of the Netherlands, designed to empower people to combat extreme poverty, and to help developing countries use ICT for sustainable development, respectively. The latter web site included a story about a Ugandan village woman who had launched an initiative to combat acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and, to finance it, by an organization known as Sapphire Women, which marketed baskets made by village women over the Internet and another about a young divorced woman who was able to earn a living transcribing the medical notes of United States doctors transferred by information technology.

2. Thanks to the Internet, it had taken hours rather than weeks to link relief organizations in Washington, D.C. to Honduran communities hit by hurricane Mitch; Jamaican farmers and women's groups in Cameroon and Gambia could access information about environment friendly technologies at community cyber centres; and school drop-out rates in Peru were being reduced, particularly in the poorest areas of Lima. People in developing countries also had access to the web site of the Agriculture Network Information Centre (www.cornell.agric.org) and the Health Network (www.health.net.nz). The information flow was not unidirectional but rather promoted dialogue and the exchange of information through e-mail and regional chat rooms in Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America.

3. His delegation welcomed the establishment of a task force of the Group of Eight to boost Internet access and help bridge the digital divide as well as the Secretary-General's initiative known as the United Nations Information Technology Service (UNITeS), in which global volunteers helped empower the poor to use information technology. In conclusion, he urged the international community to exploit ICT in its efforts to attain the Millennium Summit goal of halving poverty by 2015.

4. **Mr. Shen** Guofang (China) deplored the destabilization of many developing countries, particularly the small and vulnerable African economies and the least developed countries, and the widening gap between the income ratio of the richest and poorest nations (currently 74 to 1) in the age of globalization. The only way to ensure that globalization benefited all countries and peoples of the world was by regulating it through an effective and coordinated governing strategy and reforming the current global economic system. The United Nations would have a key role to play in that process.

5. A major component of such regulation should be reform of the current multilateral trading and financial system, which must be open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, as reiterated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2, para. 13). To achieve that it was necessary to enhance policy coordination, promote cooperation and focus greater attention on the needs of developing countries. An important precondition would be the full and effective participation of developing countries in the decision-making aspect of the reform exercise. The high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development should generate action-oriented results to that end, and its preparatory process should include input from the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). In an age of interdependence, the developing countries must implement sound domestic policies to promote poverty eradication and sustainable development; in turn, the international community must create a supportive environment for the developing countries, particularly with respect to financial resources, trade and science and technology.

6. With a view to bridging the digital divide, the international community should create an external environment that promoted developing countries' access to information technology for development. His delegation hoped that the United Nations would accord top priority to the promotion of information technology in support of development and play a leading role in

helping developing countries gain access to information technology. It appreciated the work done by various bodies of the United Nations system in that regard thus far and supported the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report, particularly with regard to strengthening infrastructure and enhancing the developing countries' ICT capabilities.

7. **Mr. Andrews** (New Zealand) said that, as an island remote from the centres of world commerce, New Zealand benefited greatly from information and communication technology and was an active participant in international transactions. Every effort must be made to ensure that the benefits of ICT were evenly distributed. Currently, 90 per cent of all Internet users lived in industrialized countries, while inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa accounted for only 0.1 per cent. The opportunities generated by the ICT revolution — in the areas of employment, education, health and environmental protection — could help the small island developing states of the Pacific region to offset their isolation and small internal markets. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the Ministerial Declaration adopted recently by the Economic and Social Council, particularly the recommendation to establish an ICT task force, which would facilitate public and private sector partnerships necessary to extend the benefits of globalization and information technology to the developing world. He cautioned, however, that ICT must not become another innovation which exacerbated division and inequity but rather one which helped to improve people's lives.

8. As a relatively isolated country which relied heavily on the agricultural sector for its export earnings and on access to developed country markets, New Zealand was keenly aware of the need for global cooperation and consensus in meeting various modern challenges, and for the integration of environmental, human rights and labour standards in international decision-making. His delegation strongly supported the Millennium Declaration's call for renewed commitment to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system (A/RES/55/2, para. 13) and, in that context, advocated a new round of multilateral trade negotiations to seek further trade liberalization, adopt fair rules governing multilateral trade and enhance the participation of developing countries in the multilateral trading system, including through the removal of protectionist policies, which cost developing country exporters an estimated US$ 700 billion a year, and the strengthening of the international financial system. It was equally important to ensure that globalization promoted core labour standards, environmental protection and human rights, and that women participated in its management. In that connection, a gender analysis of the globalization process and its impact would be useful. Lastly, he stressed the importance of moving beyond the North-South divide and developing partnerships with key non-governmental actors in globalization, including international economic institutions, the private sector and civil society.

9. **Mr. Adawa** (Kenya) said that globalization had made many developing economies, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, increasingly volatile and vulnerable to negative external shocks. In order to ensure that the developing countries, too, could reap the benefits of globalization and interdependence, the international community must promote the democratization of international economic decision-making; the integral consideration of trade, finance, and developmental issues by international institutions; the reform of the international financial system; and improved access by developing countries to resources, markets and science and technology.

10. In order to create an enabling international environment and genuine global partnership for development, it would be necessary to strengthen existing bilateral, multilateral and private financial flows, investment and trade; maintain international and national stability; and enhance the democratization process in international relations. An open, rule-based, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable multilateral trading system that accorded preferential treatment to the weak and vulnerable would be vital to that end. The United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions should provide new and additional financial resources to the developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa; and the international community should cancel external debt; fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance, with an additional 0.15 per cent to the least developed countries; increase flows of foreign direct investment for development; remove all trade barriers to accommodate developing countries' exports; provide financial assistance for scientific and technological capacity-building in the developing countries; help eradicate poverty, illiteracy, malaria and human

immunodeficiency virus (HIV/AIDS); address the impact of internal and external conflicts on development; combat environmental degradation; and provide disaster relief.

11. The United Nations should play a central role in promoting multilateral cooperation for development through genuine partnership, and its policies should be taken into account by the leading trade and multilateral financial institutions. His delegation fully supported the streamlining and harmonization of various United Nations initiatives and programmes on African development. In conclusion, the negative aspects of globalization had increased the urgency of establishing a new international economic order. To that end, developing countries must be fully involved in international economic decision-making, including in the reform of the multilateral trading and financial system.

12. **Ms. Taddei** (San Marino) noted that, ever since the session of the World Trade Organization held in Seattle, public opinion no longer remained silent on international economic issues, and that its priorities actually mirrored those of intergovernmental bodies: poverty eradication, debt relief and environmental protection. At the same time, the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, religious institutions and trade unions, were playing a much greater role in the work of the World Bank.

13. Rather than spelling their disappearance, globalization must afford greater opportunities to small countries willing to assume the responsibility of introducing necessary changes and abiding by the relevant rules with a view to enhancing their competitiveness. All States, regardless of their size, should be able to participate in the deliberations to establish new and transparent rules. In conclusion, the particular cultures and lifestyles of nations and regions must not be obliterated by the globalization process.

14. **Mr. Valdés** (Chile) said that globalization and interdependence affected the nature of external relations of all countries, as well as the daily lives of individuals. In Chile, the technological transformations that shortened distances and made instant communication possible were seen as positive factors for economic and social development. The ICT revolution promoted the development of open societies and could be a valuable and effective safeguard of fundamental rights and freedoms, for people could no longer plead ignorance of what was happening elsewhere. The new situation put the international community in a unique situation to promote a real policy of defence and promotion of peoples' rights. It was no longer politically or morally possible to not react or to refuse to help those affected.

15. Another aspect of globalization and interdependence was the density of commercial and financial exchanges between nations. That was a special opportunity for small countries such as his own. Chile had opened its economy and tried to integrate into the world economy, using its comparative advantages, and in just over 10 years, it had seen its economy double in size and poverty decline drastically. Chile's experience confirmed that economic globalization was a source of opportunities.

16. Globalization was also important as a cultural factor; travel and communications via the Internet should serve to promote a genuine dialogue between civilizations, to broaden people's horizons and to promote tolerance and personal enrichment. While realizing that globalization could also lead to cultural uniformity and threaten local and regional traditions, Chile believed that the challenge should be met by increasing investment in education.

17. Chile was working on all fronts: to enhance regional and universal statutes to defend human rights and democracy; to promote free trade at all levels and to help bring about tolerance and mutual respect for diverse cultural traditions in an open global society.

18. Although it was true that globalization could lead to greater inequalities, accepting globalization did not mean accepting the law of the jungle or anarchy. If globalization was to have a human face, it would be necessary to create global norms and institutions to regulate the various areas, including finance, technology, the environment and commerce.

19. The political will that was needed to reduce the inequalities, instability and crisis brought by globalization could only come from the Member States of the United Nations. According to the decision taken at the Millennium Summit, globalization must be regulated so that it could benefit all people, particularly the least privileged. That required a broad international consensus. The international community could not afford to make the mistake of allowing a small and exclusive group of countries to define the regulatory

norms and institutions. He valued the opinions of developed countries, but there had to be proper international governance.

20. The General Assembly should create a space in which all could participate in the definition of the new world. Because it had the necessary political legitimacy, the General Assembly had a major responsibility to preserve and extend the benefits of globalization to all, by seeking a broad consensus on common policies and strategies to promote a process of globalization characterized by inclusion and recognized as equitable, in which people came first.

21. His delegation would support all actions aimed at promoting such an inclusive, humanistic globalization. It would support measures to strengthen the work of the United Nations in science and technology, bearing in mind the need to eradicate the digital divide; and it was in favour of a new round of trade negotiations with the special aim of involving developing countries in world trade. Finally, the United Nations should fulfil its role of promoting development and supporting equity in the world economy by promoting a major international event on financing for development.

22. **Mr. Kobayashi** (Japan) said that the driving force behind globalization was information technology which made it possible for individual and private sector users to participate directly in global economic activities and for developing countries to pursue economic growth by leapfrogging technological ladders. While the private sector had primary responsibility for the development and promotion of information technology, public sector organizations also had a vital role to play, including by establishing adequate laws, systems and policies; developing the physical infrastructure required for the development of information technology; and integrating information technology into their own work. Moreover, developing countries should assume ownership over the promotion of information technology within their own borders and should use information technology as a means of achieving their policy goals in the areas of poverty eradication and economic and social development. In that regard, commitment and leadership at the highest political level was required.

23. The digital divide must be bridged if all countries were to enjoy the benefits of globalization. Specifically, developed countries could assist developing countries in their efforts to promote information technology through technological transfers, infrastructure development, advice on legislation and policy aimed at attracting investment and user training. Japan was preparing a comprehensive cooperation package consisting of official development assistance (ODA) and non-ODA public funds with a view to making available a total of US$ 15 billion for the development of information technology over a period of five years in developing countries. The package emphasized four policy dimensions, namely, intellectual assistance for policy and system-building; human capacity-building through training and education; infrastructure and networking; and the use of information technology in development assistance.

24. The United Nations could assist developing countries in their efforts by promoting the use of information technology while also mobilizing such technology in its operational activities. Furthermore, the United Nations and other relevant international organizations could participate in the formulation of international rules regarding security in cyberspace. Developing and developed countries, together with the United Nations and other relevant international organizations should further strengthen their cooperation and synergy so that all people could enjoy the benefits of globalization by bridging the information gap and making the best possible use of information technology.

25. **Mr. Klopotowski** (Poland) said that globalization had become a fashionable word to describe the emergence of a world that was no longer made up of relatively independent loosely related national States but, rather, of a closely integrated and electronically connected system in which national economic decisions must take into account international factors. The challenge was ensuring that the potential significant economic gains of that dynamic process were equitably distributed both within and among countries. Globalization was not yet truly global; its benefits were still limited to those countries that had been able to sufficiently develop their institutional and material infrastructure and to create an attractive economic environment. Out of a total of US$ 644 billion of foreign direct investment in 1998, developed countries had received 71.5 per cent, developing countries 25.8 per cent and countries with economies in transition 2.7 per cent. There was therefore a real danger of further marginalization of a significant part

of the world. If support for the policy of openness and financial liberalization in the developing world was to be sustained, globalization should not lead to the further impoverishment and marginalization of the poor countries. Otherwise, it would increasingly be called into question.

26. Globalization increased competitive pressures and might hurt certain sectors and regions by provoking social unrest and political disturbances. Growing economic interdependence made national economies vulnerable to external shocks, including financial contagion and currency crises. Satellite television and the Internet might adversely affect social cohesion, undermining traditional values and changing the behaviour patterns of local communities. The variety of challenges posed by globalization revealed the weaknesses of global institutions and highlighted the need for a more effective global cooperation focusing on better management of global interdependence. If globalization was to fulfil its great promise as an effective instrument for development, the approach of the international community towards that phenomenon should not be limited exclusively to economic and financial mechanisms designed to extend the range of world economic markets, but should also take into account the complex impact of economic globalization on the social and political life of nations.

27. Strong State institutions were crucial, since they determined the capacity of States to achieve effective integration into the world economy. Good governance was also a key factor in ensuring increased private capital flows to developing countries and mobilizing domestic financial resources for development. Moreover, apart from sound macroeconomic policy, structural reforms were essential. Such reforms should cover, inter alia, the building of effective financial and economic institutions, the elimination of corruption, development of democratic institutions, respect for private property and the establishment of an independent judiciary.

28. Information and communication technology was one of the major driving forces behind globalization. There was no doubt that such technology yielded important economic and social benefits and that new technologies stimulated scientific progress and enriched human choices. However, while education in information and communication technology was a necessity, the key to it remained traditional education.

29. **Mr. Amaziane** (Morocco) said that the digital divide between countries of the North and those of the South must be narrowed. Industrialized countries, which accounted for only 15 per cent of the world's population, had 88 per cent of Internet users. The fact that 80 per cent of the web sites used English, although that language was spoken by less than 15 per cent of the world's population, made access to the web even more difficult. There was agreement on the importance of information and communication technology for the development of developing countries. Furthermore, the bodies, agencies and funds of the United Nations system were making greater use of information and communication technology in national capacity-building and were implementing pilot projects using such technologies. However, while his delegation welcomed the various initiatives in that area by the United Nations system, it would have liked to receive information on the financial commitments made in that area in order to be able to assess the extent of such efforts.

30. In any case, he hoped that the international community would vigorously support the information and communication technology programmes of the United Nations agencies and the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations on the transfer of such technologies to developing countries. It was obvious that the necessary financial resources needed to be rapidly mobilized.

31. If any serious headway was to be made in the international economic, financial and trading system, developing countries must be allowed to participate, in accordance with the principles of transparency and democracy, in international decision-making machineries in the economic sphere in order to voice their concerns and interests. Moreover, there should be multilateral monitoring of the macroeconomic policies of the major economic powers to ensure that their decisions did not adversely affect the vital interests of other countries and to guarantee that the cost of financial crises were equitably shared among the various players. Lastly, international trade in products of export interest to developing countries should be liberalized and the obstacles preventing those countries from enjoying the comparative advantages that they had in several sectors should be removed. His delegation hoped that the process under way would provide the international community with the ideal

opportunity to make brave decisions to establish greater equity in international economic relations.

32. **Mr. Vencel** (Slovakia) recalled that many delegations had spoken of globalization as a double-edged sword which brought unprecedented opportunities for economic growth, yet further widened the disparities between the developed and the developing countries. The United Nations had the task of bridging the digital divide and helping the developing countries to share the fruits of the information revolution. The same concept of enabling the weak to develop their capacities should be applied in international development assistance, and he fully supported the Secretary-General's initiative on the United Nations Information Technology Service.

33. It was imperative that the international community give priority to the needs of the least developed countries. International initiatives in that area should be based on a system-wide inventory of ICT and related activities undertaken by United Nations entities and other forums. The international community could then decide on the best practices and provide advisory services for formulating policies for foreign direct investment and for attracting innovative information and communication technologies.

34. In order to succeed in that common objective it was necessary to mobilize all potential players in a more coordinated manner at the international, regional and local levels. The task force to be established under the Secretary-General's leadership and the proposed fund would contribute to policy coherence among the United Nations funds and agencies.

35. He commended the international organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the regional commissions, for their work to bridge the digital divide, in particular to tackle the lack of infrastructure, education, capacity-building, investment and connectivity in developing countries and countries in transition.

36. The technology and resources that were potentially available to address those problems did not always reach the areas of greatest need. The lack of basic human and physical infrastructure, and the limited prospects of returns on private capital were among the major obstacles.

37. In the extended partnership, all partners, including the private sector, civil society organizations, and local authorities, could be involved in achieving a fairer distribution of the potential of globalization.

38. **Mr. Zuffri** (Brunei Darussalam) said that human resources development geared towards information and communication technology was extremely important for optimizing the process of globalization. Countries must therefore equip their people to seize the available opportunities by investing in education programmes. However, that was not sufficient. Strengthened international cooperation was also needed to promote development in the context of globalization and interdependence. The United Nations was in a unique position to do all of that. In that regard, he commended the Economic and Social Council for devoting its high-level segment of July 2000 to the theme of "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy". He also welcomed the establishment of an information and communication task force.

39. He urged the developed countries to play an active role in providing the necessary assistance to all countries in need and urged the United Nations to help ensure that everyone benefited from the process.

40. **Mr. Jayanama** (Thailand) said that, unless handled properly, globalization could harm rather than benefit the developing countries. Yet they needed to participate in the process if they did not wish to be left behind in the race for economic and technological well-being.

41. The recent global economic crises had shown that globalization was market and technology-driven. Those aspects of globalization were well-known, but an understanding of its other aspects was also important. First, globalization was not a one-time event but a process, and therefore, it would evolve as a result of interactions among its key components: liberalization, multilateral trade and policies of the major economic powers. Second, countries could choose to join the process step by step as they were ready; such stage-by-stage participation of developing countries in globalization was permitted in both the IMF and WTO agreements. If a country did not have sufficient preparation or was too slow in joining the process, the developed countries, the international financial institutions and the United Nations could help them.

42. The Secretary-General had advocated the idea of a global compact for the private sector and the

narrowing of the digital divide, and some developed countries had already begun to assist with capacity-building and training in governance. But that was not enough. The developed countries and international financial institutions must also implement more global policy coherence in economic and financial areas, since policies of major countries did very much affect the well-being of developing countries. Coherence was strongly advocated in some sectors such as narcotics, small arms and nuclear non-proliferation, but not nearly to the same extent in trade and finance. The high-level event on financing for development would provide an excellent opportunity to discuss trade and financial coherence.

43. **Mr. Mohammad Kamal** (Malaysia) said that when the use of information and communication technology was consistent with local goals for social and economic development, it could contribute to the emergence of a truly global knowledge society, which was a prerequisite for sustainable development in the twenty-first century. Towards that end, Malaysia had embarked on an agenda for the intensification of knowledge use in all sectors of its economy. A multimedia super-corridor had been developed that created, for the first time ever, an integrated environment with all the unique elements and attributes necessary to create a global multimedia climate. A futuristic city by the name of Cyberjaya, equipped with world-class telecommunications network and other facilities to test ideas and concepts of e-business, had been set up within the multimedia super-corridor project.

44. The emerging and rapidly changing lifestyle and work practices associated with information and communication technology and knowledge societies had posed a greater challenge to women and other marginalized groups. Malaysia had made every effort to ensure that all segments of its society had access to new information technology, particularly computer and Internet facilities. At the Second Global Knowledge Conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and other members of the Global Knowledge Partnership had developed a global knowledge Action Plan.

45. Effective development required a careful balancing of the roles of government and the private sector across a broad range of policies and actions. Malaysia had always emphasized a strong partnership between the public and private sectors. That policy had enabled his country to attain a new level of international competitiveness and participate more actively in the emerging global information economy. His delegation was disheartened to note that less than 5 per cent of the world's population was engaged in activities related to information and communication technology and that the majority of the Internet host company computers were in rich countries.

46. It was imperative to examine what opportunities developing countries had with regard to benefiting from information and communication technology and what obstacles they faced. Greater efforts were required at all levels — national, regional and international — to assist developing countries enhance their capacity-building process and to better understand the various aspects of information and communication technology. Such cooperation would help to assure developing countries that venturing into information and communication technology would not be a risky endeavour or a leap into the dark, but a well-prepared and safe journey to building a global knowledge society.

47. **Mr. Kang** Jeong-Sik (Republic of Korea) said that globalization and growing interdependence among nations was opening up both new opportunities and new challenges. The global economy had actually brought prosperity to many different areas of the world, and ICT, when properly used, could help to address difficult issues as diverse as drug control and crime prevention, health, education, the environment and social equity.

48. However, globalization had another face. Many of the world's people were falling behind and becoming marginalized, while others had been forced to trade a sense of security for the cause of competition and efficiency. Enormous inequalities existed across the globe and often within countries. Those challenges needed to be addressed promptly and effectively.

49. The United Nations was in a unique position to lead the way towards harnessing the forces of globalization so that they could benefit all parts of the globe, while minimizing their potential risks. It should play a catalytic role in formulating policy responses to the challenge of globalization, should fill any institutional deficit resulting from greater international integration and should develop effective partnerships with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society. His delegation was

fully committed to making its due contribution to that task.

50. **Ms. Leonce** (Saint Lucia) said that the United Nations had played a central role in many initiatives and policies that had been pursued on a worldwide scale, with the hope of attaining peace, security and development. There had been a process of globalization of democracy, of peace, and of cooperation and the United Nations had rightfully asserted its leadership in those areas. However, other aspects of life including the economy were also being globalized, and there the process was being led by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the private sector. As a result, there was no global discussion or participation and there were no agreed commitments on economic matters or technology. That was not as it should be for according to the Charter, the United Nations also had a mandated role to play in development.

51. The globalizing economy represented the interests of developed countries and profit-driven corporations and individuals. Of the 100 largest economic units, 51 were corporations and 49 were countries; the 200 largest corporations employed less than one third of 1 per cent of the global workforce, but controlled over 30 per cent of the world's wealth. Those corporations were a formidable force in the world economy, yet they were privately owned and the benefits were concentrated in the hands of a few people and countries. There would be no development or benefit for developing countries in the corporate global economy.

52. At a time of such glaring disparities and injustice, the role of Governments and the United Nations in the global economy was being weakened and consequently diminished. Moreover, UNDP and the World Bank had adopted a new policy orientation of creating an enabling environment for the private sector rather than preparing development projects for developing countries as originally mandated. The United Nations unit for monitoring transnational corporations had been effectively silenced and even in the Second Committee, the time allotted to subjects of concern to developing countries, such as globalization, was increasingly compromised, and thus their concerns were marginalized.

53. The benefits of globalization must be globalized in the same way as democracy, peace and international cooperation, and the international community must take decisive, meaningful action. The United Nations must assume leadership as it had in other areas and ensure that the weak and vulnerable were protected. Its mandated role was not to assist in facilitating global markets for the private sector, nor to build an army to control the rebelling poor and desperate but rather to uphold the principles of equity, justice, and an integrated approach to development for the benefit of all the people.

54. Given the economic situation of most developing countries the Committee should be discussing not debt relief but debt cancellation, special and differential treatment on a contractual basis, and the meeting of United Nations targets for official development assistance within the first decade of the new millennium.

55. Discussion of a monitoring unit in the United Nations for transnational corporations and a code of conduct for such corporations should be revived and the United Nations agencies working for development, UNDP, UNCTAD and UNIDO should be given resources and personnel, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries.

56. Phased liberalization should take account of markets of vastly different sizes and strength, and the global economy should respect the role of Governments. Otherwise, all the gains in democracy, decolonization and international cooperation would amount to nothing. If globalization continued as currently conducted, the new millennium would have only one culture, and it would not be poverty that was eradicated but the poor.

57. The international community was unanimous in condemning terrorism, promoting democracy and defending human rights. Yet the small, weak and vulnerable continued to be terrorized into unsustainable development options and destructive liberalization. Undemocratic institutions and policies were promoting economic colonization, and the right to development of the developing countries was being violated. While there was much talk of poverty eradication, little was being done to address its causes.

58. The United Nations must fulfil its development mandate or else the current "globalism", like terrorism, communism and imperialism, would lead to injustice, oppression and death.

59. **Mr. Aung Htoo** (Myanmar) said that globalization was now accepted as a fact of life, and information and communications technology had played a pivotal role in the process. The early promise of globalization was still an illusion for most of the developing countries, however. The time had come to bridge the digital divide and utilize information and communications technology to benefit the developing countries.

60. Without Internet access, the potential benefits from e-commerce, tele-medicine, and distance education, could not be achieved. In order to achieve such access it would be necessary to invest heavily in the telecommunications sector, establish necessary institutions, develop human resources and provide a conducive framework of government policies.

61. His delegation was therefore encouraged by the Economic and Social Council's decision to establish an ICT task force and trust fund. The United Nations must play a critical role in closing the digital divide by providing an interface between the information technology community and the development community.

62. His delegation believed that the establishment of integrated multipurpose and multimedia community information centres, as suggested in the Council's Ministerial Declaration, would not only provide affordable connectivity in developing countries but would serve as education centres for the dissemination of technology at the grass-roots level.

63. In a developing country like Myanmar with limited resources, harnessing the new technology was a daunting task, but his Government was determined to utilize the new technology as much as possible. To fully utilize the potential of such technology at country level, the respective United Nations agencies on the ground must provide advisory services in the formulation of policies for the acquisition of ICT and the legal, fiscal and institutional framework needed, including an intellectual property rights regime.

64. **Mr. Bautista** (Philippines) said that his Government had tried to capitalize on the benefits of information and communications technology so as to bring the benefits of globalization to its people and ensure that they were not excluded from the emerging information economy. His Government was in the process of establishing the necessary legal infrastructure, in recognition of the importance of electronic commerce and the need for public confidence in the emerging digital economy. It was also seeking to optimize the use of ICT to enhance productivity and efficiency and to provide electronic access to public information and services through web sites and by making it possible to conduct some transactions electronically. It was also investing significantly in ICT infrastructure for the people, through, for example, computer facilities in science high schools and selected secondary schools.

65. The major challenges in bringing the benefits of ICT to the developing world were lack of infrastructure and the need for education, capacity-building, investment and connectivity. The concept of interdependence must permeate the discussion of all agenda items and draft resolutions. The success of the work done on the environment, financing for development, poverty alleviation and other related areas would in the end benefit all of humanity. Sadly, the opposite was also true.

66. **Mr. Husain** (Observer, Organization of the Islamic Conference) said that the Organization of the Islamic Conference was also working to provide Internet access and develop communications technology throughout the developing world, and he described a number of its initiatives in that area.

67. The Conference was interested in the proposal to form an ICT task force under the leadership of the Secretary-General, as all its members were developing countries which stood to benefit from the initiative. It welcomed the suggestion to intensify South-South cooperation in ICT for development projects, including ideas and projects for enhancing direct connectivity among developing countries. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's suggestion to mobilize 30,000 new ICT trainers, primarily from developing countries, in conjunction with the initiative for a United Nations Information Technology Service.

68. In closing, he once again acknowledged the common interest in promoting information technology in support of development efforts and facilitating a process of globalization that would spread its benefits to all countries.

69. **Mr. Khan** (Director, Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that globalization had emerged as the central challenge to the international community, with development and poverty eradication its central

goals. The United Nations had a key role to play in that area.

70. The newly established information and communications technology task force would help to strengthen the partnership with the private sector in expanding access and using ICT as a tool to achieve the social and economic goals which had been on the United Nations agenda for decades. The three key elements of the question were a regulatory environment and policy framework for connectivity, how to achieve connectivity and access for the poorest countries, and ways and means of developing human capacity.

71. A consultative process had been initiated to which the Secretary-General was giving high priority. The high-level panel of experts on information technology was developing an approach to attract the participation of the private sector. The process should result in a comprehensive set of ideas and approaches to submit to Member States as the foundation of the United Nations role in that area of globalization. Those efforts should be seen in the context of the response by the United Nations system to the key challenges of globalization and its role in bringing access to developing countries and encouraging their participation in the information technology marketplace.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/55/SR.24

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Chairman: Mr. Niculescu ..... (Romania)

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00-70881 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Agenda item 95: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*) (A/C.2/55/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.2/55/L.11: Enhancing complementarities among international instruments related to environment and sustainable development

1. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that it followed upon General Assembly resolutions 53/186 and 54/217 and that its chief aim was to favour synergy among the international instruments related to environment and sustainable development and to strengthen cooperation among the secretariats of the relevant instruments and organizations involved. He counted on the support of all the delegations associated with the text; his own delegation stood ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with all Member States.

2. He drew attention to a typographical error in footnote 3 to the text, which should read "A/55/357" instead of "A/55/57".

3. **Mr. Le Gargasson** (France) underscored the importance attached by the European Union to enhancing complementarities among international instruments related to environment and sustainable development, the subject of the draft resolution just introduced, and pointed out that the member States of the European Union had decided to sponsor the text.

Agenda item 99: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/55/407)

4. **Mr. Langmore** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development), introducing the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/55/407), said that poverty was now the major moral issue before the international community, whereas 20 years earlier it had been the arms race and the survival of humanity, still a subject of concern but less urgent at the moment. One fifth of the world's population lived in extreme poverty and one seventh suffered from chronic malnutrition. Poverty brought with it not only hunger and insufficient income but also, among other things, political marginalization and a lack of access to education and health services. Half of humanity lived on less than two dollars a day at a time when the world had never known such wealth and when it possessed unprecedented technological capabilities.

5. Inequalities of income and wealth were steadily growing both within countries and among them. Unfortunately, the obstacles to social justice were so formidable that many were despairing and giving up the fight. Yet there were strategies, policies and programmes that were able to make a difference, and some of them were already in place. Thus, political will played a critical role. In its special session of June 2000, the General Assembly had taken crucial steps to reduce poverty by deciding, for the first time, to set itself the target of reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by the year 2015, a goal reaffirmed by the Millennium Summit. Most countries had taken measures to fight against poverty, particularly by creating conditions that would allow the poor to help themselves. The international agencies, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, were now giving more attention to poverty reduction. Substantial progress had been made, in countries as different as China and Ireland, despite the considerable obstacles that remained. One should therefore not be defeatist.

6. At the twenty-fourth special session recently held in Geneva on social development, the General Assembly had defined many elements that were central to a global poverty eradication strategy. Among other things, it had set out about 40 initiatives intended to strengthen the ability of the poor to help themselves, create jobs, improve basic education, facilitate access to credit and microcredit and promote rural development; at the international level, for example, access to the international trade system had to be expanded, debt relief had to be granted, developing countries and countries in transition had to be given a greater part in economic decision-making and the resources allocated to social development had to be increased.

7. Perhaps a new institutional arrangement should be devised to further mobilize the struggle against poverty, focus the world community's attention on the problem and improve coordination of the activities of international organizations.

8. **Mr. Tomasi** (France) said that he was speaking on behalf of the European Union, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the

European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey and, in addition, Iceland.

9. The struggle against poverty and inequality was a central priority of the European Union, which in fact was making an important contribution to advancing that goal through its development assistance policy. The European Union reaffirmed its support for the provisions and commitments of the Millennium Declaration regarding poverty elimination and the convening of the High-level International and Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development.

10. The negative social and economic impact of the many conflicts, natural disasters and declining raw material prices in Africa must of course be underscored; but particular attention must also be paid to the inequalities, particularly with regard to income distribution, access to basic social services and productive resources, that were also at the root of the various forms of impoverishment. The European Union was particularly concerned at the impact of HIV/AIDS, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, and its effect on the spread of poverty. It therefore supported the proposal to convene a special session of the General Assembly on the subject.

11. Much remained to be done to achieve the objective, reaffirmed at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and in the Millennium Declaration, to reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by the year 2015. Greater advances had to be made in a number of fields, namely school attendance, habitat, the improvement of health indicators and access to basic social services, and in reducing the degradation of the natural resources on which the poor depended. The European Union recognized that the 20/20 initiative, as interpreted at the Oslo Conference in 1996 and the Hanoi Conference in 1998, could be effective in helping to ensure the widest possible access to basic social services. Applying such a concept, which presupposed the support of the international community, was primarily the responsibility of the beneficiary countries, which were the ones to determine the planning and allocation of resources.

12. The European Union maintained that all donor countries should intensify their efforts to achieve the objective of devoting 0.7 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) to official development assistance (ODA).

13. It stressed the importance of sustained and continued growth in combating poverty. Economic policies must aim to strengthen the productive capacities of the poor by promoting economic activities that created jobs and measures that gave the poor access to the means of production, to ensure equitable distribution of income, and to safeguard the environment.

14. While recognizing the great potential of globalization as a catalyst for the economic development of the poorest countries, the European Union feared that certain developing countries were not in a position to benefit fully from it. The private sector should become more heavily involved in the struggle to reduce poverty. It was necessary to increase foreign direct investment in the developing countries, especially the least developed. Trade liberalization and the opening of markets were also key factors in poverty eradication strategies. Moreover, it was necessary to help create a domestic and foreign environment favourable to the development of productive investment that could sustain strong economic growth. That was one of the reasons why the European Union attached such importance to good governance, in particular the wise management of public affairs, a respect for human rights and the rule of law, the democratization of institutions, transparency and the accountability for the management of public affairs, and the participation of citizens in taking the decisions that concerned them.

15. Debt repayment hampered the activities of the developing countries that were most vulnerable to poverty. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative was an essential element in the struggle against poverty and in the developing countries' attempts to achieve sustainable development. The speedy implementation of the Initiative would enable beneficiary countries not only to mobilize their resources to reduce poverty by allocating them to social sectors such as education and health but also to create the necessary conditions for a State governed by the rule of law and human development. The European Union called on countries which fulfilled the requisite conditions to take the measures needed to embark on that process. It also called on creditor countries which had not yet done so to participate in funding the expanded Initiative so as to spread the burden more

evenly. The Union would make sure that financial aid provided under the Initiative would not be to the detriment of other channels of official development assistance. It also believed that the struggle against poverty should be a primary objective of macroeconomic stabilization policies. It therefore welcomed the decisions by the Bretton Woods institutions to make that objective a central feature of their policies and programmes. It also supported the reforms under way in United Nations funds and programmes.

16. The European Union recognized that special attention should be given to the most vulnerable and those most affected by poverty, such as children, indigenous peoples, elderly or disabled people and refugees and displaced persons.

17. The United Nations Millennium Declaration contained a timely reminder of the importance of promoting sexual equality and the empowerment of women as an effective way of combating poverty, hunger and disease and promoting sustainable development. It was particularly important to give women access to the ownership of land, particularly through the provision of equal inheritance rights, and to ensure access to credit. The Union considered that the development of microcredit would be a good way of strengthening women's role in economic development.

18. By the same token, while the international community had, particularly at the high-level debate at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, acknowledged the role of information technologies in development, the Union emphasized that women should be given equal access to such technologies with men.

19. Lastly, the European Union stressed the importance of effective participation by the people concerned, by their national and local representatives and by organizations of civil society in defining and implementing policies to combat poverty.

20. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that at the Millennium Summit world leaders had made the eradication of poverty one of their immediate priorities and reaffirmed their support for the aim of reducing extreme poverty by half by 2015. If, however, current trends were maintained, it would not be possible to attain that target. Although considerable efforts had been made since the World Summit for Social Development at both the national and international level, global poverty was on the increase, especially in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

21. Poverty was a complex phenomenon which related not only to low income and consumption but also to low achievement in such areas as education, health and nutrition. The poor faced serious problems with regard to jobs, credit, access to safe drinking water and sanitation services. The least developed countries, in particular, were confronted with too many competing priorities. The "promise" of poverty eradication through stabilization and structural adjustment programmes had never materialized.

22. Faced with that disappointing situation, the international community had reaffirmed its political will to eradicate poverty — first, with some vigour, at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and then with greater strength at the Millennium Summit — and to move more swiftly towards achieving that aim. The Secretary-General's report had recommended several possible avenues of action, mostly focusing on the area of growth and macroeconomic issues. While growth was an important factor, it could never guarantee the eradication of poverty, which was a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, with numerous social ramifications that contributed to its continued increase. Three of the conclusions reached in the report, however, deserved particular attention. First, bilateral and multilateral efforts were needed to safeguard vulnerable populations, especially in cases of economic crisis, since gains achieved over a long period were in danger of being rolled back when a developing economy was in prolonged shock. Secondly, new trading opportunities created by improved market access to industrial countries should be complemented by operational programmes, technical assistance and development finance, so that the least developed countries, in particular, could make the best use of their preferential market access. Lastly, there was an urgent need to invest in the development of the human capital of the poor in order to help them lift themselves out of poverty, by ensuring that all children had the opportunity to go to school and by improving the quality of education.

23. A wealth of ideas had been generated by the major conferences of the 1990s and their review and appraisal processes, which had resulted in ambitious strategies needed for reducing poverty, but the moment

had come for concrete action to attain the agreed targets within the stipulated time.

24. **Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that at the threshold of a new century mankind faced a profound and disheartening contradiction. While technological and scientific advances had brought about communication without frontiers, injustice and inequality had increased, thereby condemning half the inhabitants of the planet to surviving on US$ 1 or US$ 2 a day. Despite the innovations, therefore, the problems of poverty, hunger, marginalization and unemployment, and their negative impact, were causing increasing concern. The member countries of the Rio Group were a case in point: 41 per cent of the population of the region suffered from malnutrition, while unemployment and underemployment were serious problems, with 56 per cent of the population working in the informal sector.

25. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, world leaders had clearly expressed their intention to spare no efforts to free men, women and children from the abject and inhuman conditions of extreme poverty. They had recommended the immediate implementation of the enhanced facility for relieving the debt of highly indebted poor countries and the provision of more generous development assistance. They had set the goal of reducing by half by 2015 the percentage of the world population with incomes of less than US$ 1 a day and the percentage of those suffering from hunger; of ensuring that children throughout the world could complete a full cycle of primary education; of reducing maternal mortality by three quarters; of halting the spread of HIV/AIDS; and of resolving by 2020 the housing problems of 100 million slum dwellers.

26. However, in view of the numerous handicaps suffered by the poor, such promises would be realized only if the principles of equality and solidarity between rich and poor nations were respected and the bonds of international cooperation were strengthened by means of adequate financial resources, a supportive international environment and the adoption of sensible domestic policies.

27. The Rio Group stressed the need to redress the balance of the emphasis placed on development, particularly its purely economic aspects. Development should be given a more human face by integrating it comprehensively with the exercise of political, social and cultural rights. For poverty had a multidimensional character which was not simply related to the lack of income but also encompassed such elements as quality of life, illiteracy, poor health, lack of access to basic services and productive goods, insecurity, lack of power and social exclusion. The Committee should therefore systematically consider every agenda item allocated to it from the perspective of the need to eradicate poverty. Nor should the environmental dimension be neglected, particularly with regard to natural disasters and the phenomenon of El Niño, which had inflicted such a devastating impact on the countries of Latin America; joint action and solidarity on the part of the international community were needed. The delegations of the Rio Group pledged to participate actively in measures taken to achieve tangible results in the quest to fulfil the supreme challenge facing the international community, which was to free its peoples from the shackles of poverty.

28. **Mr. Leiro** (Norway) said that it was unacceptable that 24 per cent of the world's population lived on less than $1 a day, but believed that the goal set at the Millennium Summit to reduce poverty to half by the year 2015 could be achieved with adequate development financing. Official development assistance had decreased from US$ 59 billion in 1994 to US$ 47.7 billion in 1997, illustrating the need for donor countries to increase their efforts to reach the goal of 0.7 per cent of GNP, as recommended by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

29. Most direct foreign investments in developing countries were made in middle-income countries. As only a small fraction of such investments benefited the poorest countries, it was necessary to establish a more development-friendly international framework and, in the developing countries, to adapt legal and institutional frameworks in order to promote domestic and foreign investment. It was also necessary to strengthen partnerships between public and private sectors with a view to the improved targeting of efforts to combat poverty. Equally, good governance at the national level should be encouraged.

30. Trade played an important part in that picture. Many developing countries lacked the capacity to utilize to their advantage the opportunities offered by global trade. Attention should also be devoted to achieving better overall resource utilization, in which context the poverty reduction strategy papers were welcome as the frameworks for sound economic

policies and for the improvement of such utilization, provided that the evolving capacity of partners was taken into account and that they were given time to involve domestic partners in their efforts.

31. It was clear that the HIV/AIDS pandemic was not only a health issue but also a development problem of disastrous proportions. Norway had therefore decided to double its funding of AIDS programmes through the United Nations system and to become more deeply involved in the challenges posed by AIDS in the fight against poverty.

32. In conclusion, he stressed that development assistance and development financing could do no more than supplement national efforts. The most important factor was the political will and determination of developing countries themselves to improve the situation of the poor. The war against poverty should be waged on every front, to which end the United Nations should devise a joint strategy that would meet the targets set at the Millennium Summit.

33. **Mr. Ben Mustapha** (Tunisia) said that striving for social progress and better living conditions for all peoples was an essential concern of the international community, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in most of the constitutional texts of United Nations bodies. That same theme was also the focus of the debates conducted at the major international conferences of the 1990s and at the General Assembly sessions which followed up implementation of the recommendations made at such conferences.

34. Given the dawn of the new millennium and the vast opportunities created by globalization as a result of rapid technological development and scientific progress, it was worrying to note that disturbing indicators were still being recorded. The Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had recently stressed that, for 820 million people, freedom from hunger remained a distant goal. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development had also stressed that 20 per cent of the global population still had no access to clean water and President Clinton had drawn a comparison between the 40 million annual deaths from hunger and the number of victims of the Second World War.

35. The international community should refuse to resign itself to that situation and should also reject a future in which a major portion of humanity was condemned to marginalization and exclusion. It should take rapid measures to save future generations from extreme poverty and the dangers which it entailed. With a view to responding to one of the major challenges to the universal conscience, Tunisia had appealed to the international community to establish a global solidarity fund which should help to reduce poverty and alleviate the effects of the hunger and destitution from which millions suffered. Intended to complement the efforts of the international community to combat poverty, the fund already enjoyed the support of various regional and international organizations, in particular the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the South Summit of the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. In accordance with the principle of human solidarity, the fund would accept donations from individuals, the private sector, associations, institutions and Governments and could already count on the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It should be managed in accordance with the principles of transparency, efficiency and flexibility. Its activities would be determined on the basis of the priorities of the recipient countries and would assume active participation by civil society, with a view to ensuring that it targeted the most vulnerable groups and the most deprived regions, in particular the least developed countries. In order to guarantee that resources were allocated to the programmes established by the fund, it was proposed that it should rely on the administrative structures of UNDP, which had a well developed network of representation.

36. It augured well that the Millennium Summit had established solidarity as one of the fundamental values which should govern international relations in the twenty-first century. Tunisia welcomed the opportunity provided by the Summit to emphasize the urgent need for action to combat poverty. As the Secretary-General had said in his statement, history would judge the international community by the yardstick of what it had done to eradicate poverty.

37. **Ms. Morake** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the report under consideration concluded that national and international efforts aimed at addressing poverty had borne mixed

results. Whereas life expectancy, access to basic social services and the average standard of living in developing countries had improved, a significant number of least developed countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, had made no progress in those areas. Africa was the poorest and least developed region in the world, where problems of technological backwardness, lack of foreign direct investment and the external debt burden persisted. Poverty reduction had also been affected by the ongoing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola, while the recent floods in southern Africa had taken a toll on lives and caused immense damage to infrastructure. In addition, numerous countries in the region were faced with unsustainable debt stocks. SADC therefore reiterated its call for full debt cancellation in the case of highly indebted poor countries.

38. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (A/55/407) drew a clear correlation between HIV/AIDS and the spread of poverty. For SADC, the fight against HIV/AIDS was therefore a priority. However, it needed the full support of the international community in providing additional financial resources for health care and education. SADC had participated in the five-year reviews of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, and the World Summit for Social Development. Both events had revealed important linkages between globalization and poverty and produced comprehensive strategies for poverty eradication in which the roles of Governments, civil society and the private sector were clearly spelt out. The critical role of women in that effort had been recognized and SADC, for its part, had committed itself to the empowerment of women.

39. The eradication of poverty was a difficult process, which could not be addressed in isolation from the question of socio-economic development. It also required measurable and targeted efforts at both national and international levels. The SADC member countries had taken steps to pool efforts in various sectors, take advantage of economies of scale and enhance integration, for instance through regional trade and cooperation agreements. Such efforts should be complemented by practical measures to address the financing gap. It was therefore disheartening to note that official development assistance levels had declined, despite increasing needs. The participants in the Millennium Summit had expressed their resolve to address global poverty and it was through forums such as the forthcoming high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries that the General Assembly, in partnership with other development actors, should take concrete action with a view to poverty eradication.

40. **Mr. Taye** (Ethiopia) said that poverty remained one of the biggest challenges facing humanity at the beginning of the new millennium in an era of global economic prosperity and major advances in science and technology. Many developing countries, especially the least developed countries, were facing intractable problems in eradicating poverty, including the lack of financial resources, unfavourable terms of trade, and inadequate infrastructure and institutional capacity. The HIV/AIDS infection rate, which was higher in poor countries, was another challenge that aggravated poverty. It was also clear that the prospect of sharing the fruits of globalization was beyond reach for the least developed countries, the majority of which were in sub-Saharan Africa; those countries, which had remained outside the process of globalization, faced the risk of increased vulnerability owing to the weakness of their economies. Poverty manifested itself in different forms and involved a set of multisectoral issues that had to be addressed in a holistic fashion. Although national Governments had the primary responsibility, international support and the creation of an economic environment favourable to development were crucial factors in poverty eradication strategies. The developed countries should increase the levels of official development assistance (ODA), encourage the flow of foreign direct investment to the least developed countries, reduce the debt burden of those countries and open their own markets to goods and services from those countries.

41. The various United Nations funds and programmes had a pivotal role in the fight against poverty in view of their comparative advantages. They must intensify their efforts both individually and through their concerted action and programmes. National economic reform programmes and development strategies the overriding mission of which was poverty eradication — such as those adopted in Ethiopia, which had yielded encouraging results in ensuring both growth and sustainable development — needed sustained support from the international

community. A concerted international effort, supported by concrete action and programmes aimed at improving the national capacities of many developing countries through financial assistance and the transfer of relevant technologies, was essential to enable developing countries to combat poverty more effectively.

42. **Mr. Mohammed** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that four years into the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, if one reviewed the progress that had been made it was clear that there was a need to intensify efforts in the fight against poverty. The various goals established by the action programmes drawn up by the United Nations, the World Bank and OECD were far from having been attained. Over one fifth of the world's population continued to live in extreme poverty, and the number of people living below the poverty line had increased in absolute figures, in Latin America, the Caribbean and South-East Asia, despite the better economic record of those regions in the 1990s. Africa presented a pathetic picture; virtually all economic and social indicators had declined, including life expectancy, the infant mortality rate, the illiteracy rate and per capita income, and the increasing incidence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic continued its devastating effects in the region. The lack of effective international action had made poverty the greatest threat to peace and security at the dawn of the new millennium. It was the single most pervasive violation of human and development rights.

43. The five-year review of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development had revealed that many developing countries faced intractable problems of poverty. The number of people living on less than $1 a day had increased in all developing regions. The major impediments to the eradication of poverty in developing countries included the lack of financial resources for development, worsening terms of trade, weak infrastructure and social services, a crushing debt burden, unemployment and increasing inequality in the distribution of income. Those problems, which had existed for many years, had been compounded by globalization, which had increased the vulnerability of developing countries.

44. The international community had to find ways to spread the benefits of globalization in trade, investment and information flows. The developed countries must fulfil the commitments made at all United Nations summit meetings and conferences of the past decades, including those relating to official development assistance; they should facilitate the flow of financial resources to developing countries, address the issue of external debt, reform the international financial system in order to reduce the impact of the volatility of capital flows, and widen the participation of the developing countries in decision-making by the international financial institutions. The forthcoming international conferences on the least developed countries and on financing for development, which would take place in 2001, would offer the international community the opportunity to redress the trend of increasing poverty, by adopting concrete measures that would assist the economic growth and enhance the social well-being of developing countries.

45. **Mr. Cabral** (World Food Programme) said that, despite the increase in global standards of living, one fifth of the world's population lived in conditions of extreme poverty, without access to safe water, adequate housing, health care or enough to eat; two thirds of the poor were women.

46. There was still much to be done to achieve the target set at the World Food Summit in Rome, namely to halve the number of chronically undernourished people by 2015. In the Millennium Summit Declaration, world leaders had renewed their commitment to achieving the target set at the World Summits in Rome and Copenhagen and halve the number of the poor by 2015. Hunger aggravated, and was aggravated by, social and political instability. Development that did not promote food security, especially for women and children, had weak foundations. Hunger was the first threshold to cross in order to eradicate poverty. The cost of halving the number of people suffering from malnutrition by 2015 was relatively low: $6 billion a year, according to FAO estimates, added to the current level of ODA. The cost of allowing hunger to persist was far greater than the cost of overcoming it. Improvements in health, nutrition, education and sanitation in the poorest countries would go a long way towards reducing poverty, yet donors were committing only around 10 per cent of their aid directly to those basic social services. Furthermore, the Governments of developing countries needed to reorient their own development policies in favour of the poorest.

47. For many countries, the solution of problems related to poverty and hunger depended to a large extent on political will. Too often civil war, natural

disasters or the breakdown of government structures resulted in the death of many people from reduced food security or famine. In 1999, the World Food Programme had assisted 29 million displaced persons who were victims of war and political conflicts; it had also assisted 31 million victims of natural disasters in the same year. The aim of WFP assistance in humanitarian operations was to save lives and to preserve the assets of the poor in ways that could accelerate the return to a normal life. Its development assistance, on the other hand, focused exclusively on the hungry and the poor, with 90 per cent of food aid directed to low-income countries. By ending hunger, a firm foundation could be laid for reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/55/SR.25

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Chairman: Mr. Niculescu ..... (Romania)
later: Mr. Hanif (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Pakistan)
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00-70917 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 94: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*)

(c) Cultural development (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.2/55/L.10

1. **Mr. Svetogorsky Marino** (Uruguay) introduced the draft resolution on cultural development on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and urged its adoption by consensus.

Agenda item 99: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*) (A/55/74, A/55/139-E/2000/93, A/55/257-S/2000/766, A/55/310, A/55/375, A/55/407)

2. **Mr. Murat** (Haiti) said that poverty was related to questions of security, vulnerability, identity, integration and culture as well as with income. Poverty meant an inadequate standard of living, fragile health, sub-standard housing or homelessness, unemployment, social exclusion and illiteracy. Extreme poverty was a relentless killer, as well. In response to that scourge, the international community at the World Summit for Social Development had reaffirmed that the right to development, which involved the eradication of poverty, was a fundamental human right.

3. In the context of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty 1997-2006, early efforts had been hampered by a number of factors including the slowdown in economic growth in the developing countries as a result of the Asian financial crisis and the drop in commodity prices. The goal set at the Millennium Summit to reduce extreme poverty by half by 2015 seemed to be slipping out of reach.

4. In the face of growing inequalities between rich and poor countries, the Decade had been a welcome initiative. However, after the first three years of its implementation, there was reason to fear that it would suffer the same fate as the four United Nations Development Decades, with their well-known record of broken promises.

5. Creditor countries had made an effort to relieve the debt of the poorest countries through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and the enhanced Cologne initiative of 1999. The effects, however, had been limited, and his delegation would like to see more generous and flexible terms under the Cologne initiative for the 48 least developed countries. More emphasis should be placed on micro-credit, which had proven to be an effective means of creating jobs and promoting self-sufficiency among the poor. Combating poverty required sustained economic growth that would create productive employment.

6. Trade liberalization and globalization of economies should open new avenues to all countries, yet the poor countries had difficulty in taking advantage of the situation. His delegation therefore called for a commitment by the international community to help the poor countries to adapt their institutions to the new trading environment through strengthening of their production capacity, improved access to developed country markets for their commodities, and the establishment of a mechanism for transfer of technology. Combating poverty called for mechanisms to promote partnerships at both the international and the national levels. The eradication of poverty would no longer be a dream if political will, solidarity and partnership were brought to bear.

7. **Mr. Kuindwa** (Kenya) said that, since the Copenhagen Summit, many countries had set national poverty reduction targets and formulated poverty eradication plans and strategies, including his own. In Kenya, poverty was pervasive; half of the population was poor, and the majority of the poor were women. The Government had undertaken measures to promote economic recovery and sustainable growth. At the core of the process had been the creation of a conducive environment for an economy to thrive, the pillar of which was peace and political stability.

8. Its efforts had been hampered by internal and external factors, including poor infrastructure, lack of capital and technology, poor health conditions and the spread of HIV/AIDS. While globalization enhanced communications, growth and development of the world economy, the resulting rapid change had been accompanied by increased unemployment, poverty and social disintegration. The ability of developing countries to participate fully in the World Trade Organization would be a determining factor in their efforts to reduce poverty.

9. His delegation called on the United Nations to strengthen its development agencies to enable them to fulfil their mandates. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) should be better prepared to address shelter issues. Sub-standard housing was an

indicator of poverty in rural and urban areas alike, and his delegation therefore supported the target regarding a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 set forth in the Millennium Declaration. It also called on the United Nations to play a more active role in poverty reduction initiatives by ensuring that Member States met their financial commitments, in particular by achieving the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance.

10. **Mr. Svetogorsky Marino** (Uruguay) noted with a sense of sadness that over a billion people lived on less than a dollar a day, and that, if the current scenario of slow economic growth and intermittent crises persisted, the number was unlikely to drop in the near future. Recent discussions on poverty reduction were well-meaning, but in reality, little had been achieved over the past 20 years.

11. Combating poverty should be the priority goal of the Organization; the proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty had therefore been very encouraging. That task was an ethical, social, political and economic imperative for the United Nations.

12. In order to combat poverty, greater investment must be made in human resources and programmes should be directed at the most disadvantaged groups and at young people. By appealing to their idealism, creativity and vitality, it should be possible to enlist them in the fight to eradicate poverty. Studies conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) indicated that young people did not consider taking up farming as a profession because they associated it with hard physical labour and low pay. The World Food Programme and FAO had made joint recommendations that Governments should establish programmes to improve living conditions in rural areas in order to encourage young people to live and work there.

13. **Mr. Diallo** (Guinea) said that in addition to globalization, the debt burden and declining official development assistance, armed conflict was a major contributing factor to the deepening poverty of developing countries. Armed conflicts in neighbouring Sierra Leone and Liberia over the past decade had led to an influx of more than 700,000 refugees into his country and that had had an impact on the standard of living of the host population and had led to an economic slow-down. The Government had been forced to reallocate funds away from the development and social sectors in order to secure its borders and conduct peacekeeping operations. The international community should spare no effort in combating the warmongers, who were, in effect, "poverty mongers" as well. Had the $2.1 billion which had been allocated for peacekeeping activities worldwide in 2000 alone been invested in development projects, humanity would have gone a long way towards eradicating poverty.

14. His Government was trying to lower the poverty rate from 40 per cent of the population to 30 per cent by 2010. To reach that goal, it had initiated reforms designed to strengthen the macroeconomic framework, ensure efficient management of public resources and improve the climate for the private sector and was focusing on the rural sector, as the poorest segment of the population lived in rural areas. Community participation in development efforts had been encouraged, and had led to significant improvements in school enrolment, health care coverage, transport infrastructure and access to safe drinking water in rural areas.

15. His Government had also benefited from the HIPC debt reduction initiative, and was planning to use the resulting resources to finance poverty reduction programmes. In closing, he expressed his country's gratitude to its bilateral and multilateral development partners for their substantial contributions.

16. **Ms. Bai** Yongjie (China) said that, at the midpoint of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, populations of the developing countries were daily struggling to survive. The Millennium Summit goal of halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income was less than one dollar a day, should become a Decade target as well. Poverty eradication efforts must address the root causes of poverty; the only way to escape poverty was through development. Impoverished populations would bear the brunt of the adverse effects of blind globalization, and those who had overcome poverty would be the first to fall back into its clutches in the event of financial turbulence. Urgent long-term measures must therefore be formulated with a view to the effective management of globalization and the equitable sharing of its benefits.

17. Her delegation supported the poverty reduction measures outlined by the Secretary-General. Poverty eradication was the shared responsibility of all and required coordinated international action. National governments should accord priority to poverty eradication in their economic and social development strategies, taking into account the specific needs of their countries. The international community, in turn, must create a supportive external environment by expanding the export opportunities of and transferring technology to the developing countries and providing the financial assistance they needed to combat poverty. The developed countries, in particular, should raise the level of official development assistance to the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product and reduce and/or cancel developing countries' debts. At the same time, multilateral financial institutions must be reformed in order to enhance their support for the poverty reduction efforts of developing countries. The United Nations system should play a key role in poverty eradication by maximizing the comparative advantages of its specialized agencies and strengthening coordination and cooperation among them.

18. Since the early 1970s, her Government had made tremendous efforts to alleviate poverty thereby helping 200 million farmers to achieve food security. Under a poverty reduction programme carried out in the past five years in consultation with various actors, China had invested sizeable resources to help poor regions improve farmland, develop skills, build irrigation and water supply infrastructure and stabilize and manage the environment. The number of poor people in the rural areas had been reduced by 8.6 million annually and it was estimated that the figure would go down by another 10 million in 2000. While the situation of the poor had improved in terms of housing, health, education and access to science and technology, and while sweeping changes had been made in the economic and social sector, China nonetheless remained a low-income developing country with a very limited capacity to provide for the basic needs (food and clothing) of its population.

19. *Mr. Hanif (Pakistan), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

20. **Mr. Tomás** (Mozambique) noted that 1.2 billion people were living on less than $1 a day; another billion were illiterate; more than 1 billion lacked access to clean water and 2.5 billion, to sanitation; over 110 million children of primary school age were not in school; and pandemic diseases, such as human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), were claiming millions of lives around the world. The Millennium Summit target of halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income was less than one dollar a day and of those unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water could be met if the international community showed the necessary political will. His delegation urged Member States to build on the momentum of the Millennium Summit and forge a practical and innovative partnership for implementing its Declaration.

21. The persistence of absolute poverty at the time of steady global economic growth was politically embarrassing and morally unacceptable. The fact that different countries were participating in the global economy at different levels of development led to inequities and marginalization. Ways must be found to ensure that the benefits of globalization were evenly distributed and that globalization had a human face. That could be achieved only through increased official development assistance and foreign direct investments; improved access to world markets; debt cancellation; and reform of the United Nations system in order to enhance its effectiveness in development assistance. In that connection, his delegation was deeply concerned that official development assistance was at a record low — 0.2 per cent of the total gross national product of the members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), that the least developed countries had received only 0.12 per cent of foreign direct investment in 1998 and that the countries benefiting from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and other arrangements still had no significant resources for investment in the social sector. He urged the international community to respond to that situation.

22. Poverty in Mozambique had been compounded by severe flooding earlier in the year. According to the *Human Development Report, 1999*, nearly two thirds of the population lived in absolute poverty; some 65 per cent had no access to safe drinking water, sanitation and health services; and some 25 per cent of some children under three years of age were underweight. Poverty eradication was the backbone of his Government's five-year plan for the period 2000-2004. The Plan of Action for the Eradication of Absolute

Poverty, adopted in 1999, was designed to reduce absolute poverty by 30 per cent by the year 2010 through rapid and sustainable economic growth; the development of human capital through public investment; increased agricultural productivity; the development of basic infrastructures in rural areas; the provision of social security to the most vulnerable groups; the promotion of employment and self-employment in the rural and urban areas; and improved national capacity to monitor and evaluate poverty. The Plan had been formulated in consultation with all social actors and stakeholders, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society at large. In conclusion, the international community must fulfil the commitments undertaken at the Millennium Summit or risk losing credibility. While poverty eradication programmes should be locally designed and owned, international cooperation and assistance were necessary to implement them in poor countries which lacked sufficient resources for that purpose.

23. **Mr. Avrahamy** (Israel) said that the only way to ensure emergency food aid — particularly when resettling displaced populations, eradicate poverty and attain basic food security was to encourage countries to enhance their primary sector through the introduction of agricultural technology. There was no short cut to the attainment of food security; it required basic investments in water development, conveyance and distribution, the accelerated training of farmers and the organization of support systems to ensure timely delivery of farm inputs, storage facilities and market outlets. As major water projects had been found to be unmanageable and often harmful to the environment, the challenge facing world agriculture would be to adopt the innovations of the agricultural, educational and environmental sciences but maintain decentralized systems of food storage.

24. In the past decade, the Centre for International Cooperation (MASHAV) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel had launched a number of demonstration projects in semi-arid regions, designed to teach more efficient and modern agricultural techniques to farmers in less developed areas. In that connection, the efficient use of water was promoted through the collection and storage of rainwater and the installation of pressure irrigation systems. Israel was in the process of developing an innovative mini-sprinkler and drip-irrigation system which could be used by farmers to construct their own small water collection and storage facilities for market gardens. His Government was seeking the cooperation of donor countries and United Nations bodies in order to introduce a large-scale programme to develop small and medium-sized demonstration projects in vulnerable regions, including Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Such projects could be tailored to local conditions and would constitute a preliminary step in the promotion of interdisciplinary action to reduce poverty.

25. **Mr. Htoo** (Myanmar) said that his delegation was encouraged by the convergence of views among the United Nations agencies and Bretton Woods institutions with regard to poverty eradication and believed that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of the World Bank would address the problem in an appropriately holistic and cohesive manner. In order to make inroads against poverty, growth prospects for developing countries which had emerged since the Asian financial crisis must be sustained over the long term, however, while economic growth was a vital precondition for poverty reduction, a concerted multi-pronged approach was needed as well. Strategies must be aimed at ensuring access to basic social services and education and capacity-building of the poor, including access to productive resources, incentives to small and medium-sized enterprises, microcredit and strengthened food security. Poverty reduction strategies must also promote equitable income distribution and minimize environmental degradation.

26. Another vital component of poverty reduction would be further trade liberalization by both developed and developing countries. Developing countries should have wider market access, particularly for agricultural commodities and textiles, and the least developed countries should enjoy comprehensive and predictable duty- and quota-free market access. In addition, policies that encouraged foreign direct investment should be promoted in the developing countries and countries unable to attract investments should receive increased official development assistance and assistance from the multilateral financial institutions. Debt relief would also generate resources for the implementation of poverty reduction strategies in developing countries. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the recent initiatives by most of the developed countries, including the United States of America, Japan and Italy, to cancel the debts of the

heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC). Although primary responsibility for the implementation of poverty reduction strategies rested with individual countries, the international community should provide effective cooperation to that end, while respecting country ownership and the specific development strategies and priorities of developing countries.

27. Myanmar was addressing poverty reduction within the larger context of overall economic development. With nearly two thirds of its population employed in agriculture, food security, expansion of agricultural production and productivity were the main thrust of its development strategy. Efforts were being made to mechanize agriculture, expand cultivated acreage and establish large-scale farming and plantations; however, traditional farmers often lacked the essential fertilizers, machinery and high-yielding crop varieties for that purpose. The Government was encouraging the private sector to become more actively involved in the agricultural sector, and was establishing industrial zones throughout the country as an incentive to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. In an effort to expand infrastructure, it was constructing east-west and north-south strategic roads, access roads for rural areas, major river crossing bridges, clusters of irrigation systems and multi-purpose dams and reservoirs. Basic health and education services were accorded top priority. In that connection, he expressed appreciation to those United Nations agencies and civil society organizations which had supplemented government efforts to provide basic health services at the grass-roots level. Increased flows of foreign direct investment and multilateral and bilateral assistance would undoubtedly give further impetus to those efforts. In conclusion, poverty eradication was a global problem which called for global political will, global ownership in addition to country ownership and a concerted and coordinated approach at the international level.

28. **Mr. Maruyama** (Japan) said that poverty and inequality were still rampant in the world today. Indeed, the average income for the richest 20 per cent of countries was 37 times the average for the poorest. While in east Asia, per capita incomes were more than seven times what they had been in 1960, in sub-Saharan Africa and other least developed countries, they were lower, in real terms, than they had been in 1970. That had been compounded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which had reduced life expectancy by 17 years in at least 10 countries. It was evident that Africa continued to require special attention. Therefore, his Government called on the international community to redouble its efforts to promote African development and to achieve the goal of halving by 2015, the proportion of the population that was living in extreme poverty.

29. While there was no consensus as to how to put an end to poverty, there seemed to be clear linkages between poverty and environmental deterioration, conflict, basic education, safe water and natural disasters. While globalization had the tremendous potential for creating new opportunities for humanity, it must be ensured that its benefits were made available to all, otherwise it might widen even further the gulf between people at different stages of development. His Government requested the United Nations system to work with the Bretton Woods institutions, especially the World Bank, in a coordinated manner in order to facilitate cooperation with the private sector and civil society. The United Nations should also promote collaboration with bilateral donors. His Government had been facilitating so-called multi-bi cooperation, which it believed provided a way for the comparative advantages of multilateral and bilateral agencies to be utilized more efficiently and effectively and for the impact of development activities to be reinforced. Accordingly, his Government would like to promote multi-bi cooperation more actively together with the United Nations funds and programmes for poverty alleviation.

30. **Ms. Comella** (Andorra) said that in order to protect the most vulnerable groups, any policy to combat poverty at the national level should be reinforced by true commitment and support at the international level. Establishing economic and social policies to combat poverty was all the more difficult for debt-burdened countries. Her delegation welcomed the results of the Group of Eight summit meeting in Okinawa in July 2000 as part of the initiative to help heavily indebted poor countries. That commitment was a first and very positive step to reducing the level of poverty.

31. Any policy to combat poverty should target women, as they continued to be the most affected. In the long term, reducing the number of women living in poverty would enhance production and make it possible to reach a true level of sustainable development. She welcomed the micro credit initiative

as a tool to create productive employment and strengthen the autonomy and entrepreneurial spirit among women living in poverty. Eliminating poverty among women would also help children and thus break a vicious circle.

32. The fight to eradicate child poverty was the most urgent. The percentage of children living in poverty was increasing because of economic crises, ethnic conflicts and civil wars, and, over the past few years, because of the AIDS pandemic.

33. When looking at poverty it was necessary to take into account non-monetary parameters, for conflicts, pandemics and environmental degradation all had an impact on poverty. That should be borne in mind when considering the statistical forecasts regarding poverty elimination.

34. **Mr. Ouch** (Cambodia) said that poverty alleviation, food security, housing and meeting the basic needs of vulnerable groups were his Government's top priorities. To achieve those objectives, it had articulated a triangular strategy. The three pillars of that strategy were peace and stability, integration of Cambodia into the international community and development and reform of its fiscal, administrative and judicial structures. While peace and stability had been established, Cambodia was continuing to take the necessary steps to integrate itself fully into the international community, while carrying out the tasks of internal development and reform.

35. Getting out of the poverty trap was a major concern for a substantial majority of the population in both rural and urban areas. The links between economic vulnerability and poverty needed to be thoroughly understood in order to focus on priority issues and problems that impeded efforts aimed at reducing poverty and vulnerability.

36. His Government's development goals for the year 2010 included reducing the level of extreme poverty by half, raising adult literacy to over 90 per cent, ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation for everyone and achieving greater gender equality.

37. At the international level, rapid globalization had widened inequalities between and within countries. As a result, many developing countries, especially the least developed ones, ran the risk of being marginalized. The United Nations and international organizations could play an important role in coordinating and strengthening cooperation between national Governments, the international community and financial institutions so as to ensure that the benefits of globalization were fairly distributed among the nations and peoples of the world. While poverty alleviation was the primary responsibility of national Governments, international action was extremely important. Issues such as the high levels of external debt, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the transfer of resources and new technology to developing countries must be addressed together in a spirit of genuine partnership and equity.

38. **Ms. Cruz** (El Salvador) said that since the World Summit on Social Development, the eradication of poverty had been a major component and objective of national development programmes, especially in developing countries. However, despite commitments by the international community, the progress achieved had been insufficient; that underscored the need for more concerted efforts to achieve the goals of poverty eradication. She highlighted the measures taken by her country and encouraging results achieved to reduce the levels of poverty, including the five-year development plan, known as the new alliance. Unfortunately, progress had been adversely affected by external economic and financial crises. That situation made it highly unlikely that the international commitments made at recent United Nations conferences, including the challenge of reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, would be achieved.

39. She therefore welcomed the recommendations of the Secretary-General aimed at enhancing the capacity of developing countries to deal with the problems of globalization. In that regard, market opportunities needed to be opened up for developing country exports, transfer of information, skills and technology should be promoted and there should be increased financial resources for investment. However, maximizing the benefits of globalization also required sound domestic policies supported by an enabling global environment and by international economic cooperation. In that regard, her delegation supported the role of the United Nations as the only international organization that had a broad system of operational activities focusing on the eradication of poverty. The strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations, Bretton Woods institutions and civil society would be vital for the success of poverty eradication programmes at the national and international levels.

40. *Mr. Niculescu (Romania) resumed the chair.*

41. **Mr. Lukwiya** (Uganda) said that it would take a long time to eradicate poverty because of the rapid changes occurring in the world. However, the international community's immediate concern should be to alleviate suffering and to progressively reduce poverty with a view to eradicating it in the long run. To achieve that objective, it was necessary to address the root causes of widespread poverty, which were both internal and external in nature. For that reason, the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty must receive attention both at the national and international levels if the international community was to achieve any measure of success by the year 2015.

42. At the national level, Governments must show more commitment in their economic and social policies by, inter alia, creating a framework for economic growth and structural transformation; taking actions which directly enhanced the quality of life of the people, for example, by providing increased access to education and health care; and taking actions which directly increased the ability of the poor to raise their income, including through the empowerment and advancement of women.

43. At the international level, emphasis should be placed on increasing and fulfilling commitments regarding wider and deeper debt relief to poor countries, increased official development assistance, greater market access for products of developing countries and strengthening of World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. Emphasis should also be put on guaranteeing the integration of all developing countries into the increasingly globalized world economy and reducing the risks of marginalization, increasing assistance to complement national efforts in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic in developing countries, and strengthening the role of the United Nations in dealing with the issues of economic and social development.

44. His Government was fully committed to the objective of reducing poverty and had taken bold steps to formulate and implement sometimes policies to that effect even when they were unpopular. In the current financial year, it had identified poverty reduction as the main goal of the national budget and had accorded preference to increased expenditure in the key social sectors of the economy. It was important to ensure that such individual national efforts were sustainable and properly coordinated at the regional and international levels. In that regard, he urged the international community to provide the necessary support for the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

45. **Mr. Wilson** (St. Vincent and the Grenadines) speaking on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) said that regional and international organizations were continuing to collaborate with national governments and civil society groups in the Caribbean area to implement poverty alleviation programmes. The main emphasis was on establishing specific mechanisms to reduce the inequities facing the poor.

46. Poverty reduction was a multi-dimensional issue; there were linkages between poverty and education, health, labour markets, gender relations and ethnicity. Poverty was more prevalent among those with less schooling and formal training, the malnourished, the unemployed and marginalized ethnic groups.

47. CARICOM recommended that investments be made in human capital for education and health, and that Government should intervene to ensure that public resources were used to subsidize those most in need. Remedial action should be taken on labour market policies, with strategies for youth training programmes and other incentives, paying greater attention to the gender gap.

48. The process of globalization, and particularly trade liberalization, was increasing the level of poverty in the Caribbean, and CARICOM was facing the challenge of how to engage in a competitive game on an unequal field, while implementing effective national policies to work towards sustainable economic and social development.

49. There had been scepticism concerning the claims that female heads of households were more prone to poverty than male headed households. The data, however, indicated that poverty was not uniform among the female and male sections of society. A major cause of that appeared to be differential access to resources. For a clearer picture to emerge, data would have to be gathered on a routine basis. Poverty was shaped not only by income but also by access to education and other services, and resulted in hunger

and malnutrition, ill health, and social discrimination and exclusion.

50. The Caribbean countries had been undergoing major economic and social reforms since the 1980s. Their economies were dependent not only on the inherited economic structures, which were changing, but also on the vulnerability of the subregion to natural disasters.

51. The poor of the subregion included the elderly, children, the disabled, small-scale farmers, unskilled workers, the indigenous population and in some countries female-headed households, as well as the underemployed and unemployed. The status of those persons could be improved by providing employment and training opportunities. The poor should be given urgent attention, and at the very least not be disadvantaged by education or the economic environment.

52. The strategies devised should not rely solely on macroeconomic policy to solve unemployment problems, but should also acknowledge the need for labour market policies to be integrated into the macroeconomic framework for positive reinforcement. Taking into account the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the CARICOM group was devising plans and policies to achieve high economic growth rates, increase productivity, encourage small enterprises, develop social contracts and partnerships, increase the equitable distribution of benefits, strengthen institutions for policy analysis and management, and seek participation in the global economy and regional economic integration. CARICOM countries were prepared to be a part of that process and to meet their commitments.

53. **Mr. Adhikari** (Nepal) said that although some progress had been made towards reducing poverty, the gains had been unevenly dispersed. Overall development assistance had considerably declined. While some development partners were making efforts to reach the target levels for official development assistance, others had reduced their level of aid. More and more developing countries were having to use their resources for debt servicing and wealth was becoming further concentrated in a few developed countries.

54. Globalization had brought overwhelming benefits and opportunities to countries that were already rich, while poor countries had lost their existing safety nets without gaining a replacement, as people lost jobs and their skills lost relevance in the new economy. Developing countries continued to face barriers to access to the technology and markets of the rich countries. Globalization was encouraging a flow of goods and services from rich countries to poor ones, but not much in the other direction.

55. The financial meltdown in East Asia had made it clear that globalization in itself was not a panacea and that it could be a source of global economic instability. The international financial infrastructure that had been established in the aftermath of World War II was no longer appropriate, and developing countries were being used as experimental grounds for the untested theories of development of the Bretton Woods institutions. Excessive intervention, including conditionalities relating to governance, development paradigms, privatization and so on, had often done more harm than good.

56. The ICT revolution had resulted in a widening gap between the rich and poor both among and within countries, thus further jeopardizing a conflict-ridden world.

57. He supported the Secretary-General's recommendations relating to poverty eradication, and noted the benchmarks set out in the Millennium Declaration. Development partners should meet the ODA targets of giving 0.7 per cent of their (GNP) to developing countries and 0.15 per cent of GNP to the least developed countries. Developing countries should be provided with greater and easier access to the rich countries' markets and technology and shall be helped to enhance their institutional capacities, mobilize domestic resources and build development infrastructure. Increased foreign direct investment would help to wean them away from official development assistance.

58. The least developed and land-locked developing countries should be given quota- and tariff-free access to rich-country markets. The better-off developing countries should offer more assistance in the form of South-South cooperation.

59. The South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation must be revived, in order to reinforce and expand activities benefiting the peoples of the region.

60. His delegation looked forward to the high-level event on financing for development and the conference on the least developed countries planned for the

following year, and to the ministerial meeting on land-locked countries in 2003. Those events should give priority to poverty eradication.

61. **Mr. Mwakawago** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that while the root cause of poverty in many developing countries, especially the least developed countries, was underdevelopment, poverty had been perpetuated by high levels of external debt, declining resource flows and deteriorating terms of trade for commodities. In some cases, globalization and liberalization of the world economy had exacerbated the situation by marginalizing developing countries. Under those circumstances, it would be difficult to attain the target of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015.

62. Comprehensive poverty eradication required accelerated economic and social development in order to, inter alia, ensure food security, improve infrastructure and produce goods and services for regional and global trade.

63. The United Nations, through its relevant agencies, as well as the donor community, would need to render increased technical assistance and provide resources for development and investment.

64. Official development assistance (ODA) had declined steadily over the past 25 years. Resource flows would have to change dramatically if poverty was to be eradicated. His delegation expressed its appreciation to Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, for meeting and even surpassing the ODA target.

65. His delegation welcomed the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative but felt that much more should be done to ease the conditionalities to make relief available more expeditiously. Comprehensive and durable solutions would include debt cancellation measures.

66. Poor countries were striving to improve the production of goods and services; developed countries should make commensurate efforts to improve the terms of trade and ensure market access for those products. Potential investors and Governments should take advantage of the investor-friendly climate that Africa had created over the past 10 years.

67. Tanzania had been implementing various poverty reduction measures since it gained independence in 1961. The national poverty eradication strategy adopted in 1998, was designed to reduce by half the number of Tanzanians living in poverty by the year 2010, the ultimate goal being to completely wipe out poverty by the year 2025.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.